

# HENRY DUNDAS

SCOTS GUARDS





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HENRY DUNDAS







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HENRY DUNDAS.

# HENRY DUNDAS

Scots Guards

*A MEMOIR*

WITH PREFACE BY

HORATIO F. BROWN, LL.D.

“If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep though poppies grow  
On Flanders Fields.”

William Blackwood and Sons  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THIS record of the life of a dearly-loved son I dedicate to his Mother. Only those who have known them can realise to the full the wonderful relationship that was theirs. He knew well the extent of his debt to her; and the intensity of his love for her is the measure of her loss.

I wish here to express her grateful thanks and mine to Mr Henry Marten and Captain Oliver Lyttelton for the chapters on Eton life and life in France which enrich this book. We are proud to feel that it was our son who inspired these narratives. Also for Mr Horatio Brown's beautiful and scholarly Preface we are under a further debt of gratitude to our friend.

R. N. DUNDAS.





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## PREFACE.

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WHILE the nation, throughout the length of the land, in its capitals, county-towns and villages, is raising monuments to the dead, whereon shall be perpetuated, in stone or bronze, the material record of their names and deeds, another, and perhaps a more spiritual memorial, is slowly taking shape, tablet by tablet, through the loving labour of pious hands, in these intimate and individual records of so many young men, some of them mere boys, who have laid down their lives in the War.

It is well that the name of every soldier who died for his country should be publicly preserved for the fortification and gratitude of generations to come, but it is also well that we should, if possible, treasure some more inward memento of the misfortune we suffer in the loss of these young lives, cut off before their ripening years; should conserve some more spiritual record, not of their names only but of what they themselves essentially were, some vision of their promise for the future,

till there shall arise, *ad æternam rei memoriam*, a noble cenotaph—nay, it is no cenotaph, no empty tomb we are thus erecting, for the very spirit of the dead lives and breathes in these pages, and no one, in the years to come, will justly measure the grievousness of war, the sacrifice of the nation, who has not adequately realised the quality of our fallen youth.

With all the inevitable imperfection and immaturity of early manhood, the impatient challenge to authority and the past, the restless reaching out beyond the borders, that may have caused anxiety to their elders, these youths were our hope for the future, the stuff from which our leaders were to be moulded. They had their own ideals, and were shaping them to the requirements of the approaching days. The social *couche* out of which so many of them came ensured them, in spite of youth's rebellious note, a deep traditional bond with the past; the education so many had received fitted them to take their place in the van of thought and action: they embodied our hope that in the period of stress and ferment, the inevitable sequel to the War, the statics and the dynamics of our social evolution would work harmoniously together, that the framework of our Empire would, thanks to them, hold good and resist the forces of disruption.

These records are varied, of course, as youth itself is varied, as the future career of those they

commemorate would doubtless have been varied ; but they are one and all animated by a noble and courageous spirit of devotion, and, though numerically they fall far short of the dolorous roll, the spiritual quality of the few may safely be taken as the measure of the many. The bloom of physical youth, the aroma of spiritual flowering, the chances and hazards, the vistas of life that lay before these young men, the brilliancy that gave promises which might or might not have been fulfilled, the perils of that

giovenil baldanza  
che fece, e poi disfece la speranza—

all lend a note of poignant regret to memoirs such as these.

But apart from the sense of personal and national loss, records like the following possess considerable value from a psychological as well as from a purely historical point of view. Hitherto most of our wars have been waged by professional armies, by men who have adopted arms as their calling, whose sole business in life it was to fight ; their energy was exhausted in their professional functions ; they were dumb and inarticulate on all that lay outside their *métier* : but in the recent conflict the whole of our youth, many of them with no natural aptitude for war and no desire to adopt arms as a profession, were swept into the maelstrom, and for the first time



in history—unless perhaps it be in early Greece—we get a close and true and lively picture of war as it strikes a soldier in the fighting line. These young men apply their minds trained to other purposes, and their power of expression to a record of their observations and emotions. Again, on the purely historical side, the presence of articulate and highly intelligent youths, actual eye-witnesses and participators in the actions they record, cannot fail to be of signal service to the historian in testing, checking, correcting formal official reports. What would we not give for such records of Marlborough's or Napoleon's wars ?

To pass from these general considerations, the following pages give us a most vivid, faithful, and fascinating portrait of one who, by general consent, was among the most promising of our young men. His own letters home—so frank, so joyous, so honest, so fearless, so characteristic, with clean, sharp-cut phrases to convey the clear incisive thought, supplemented as they are by the testimony of his masters and brother officers—form the material for this engaging presentment of Henry Dundas.

It is not necessary, nor indeed is it possible, for me to add to the picture ; but I may, perhaps, be allowed to give in a few words my own reminiscent impression of that vivid personality. Thinking of Henry Dundas, the characteristic which

recurs most persistently to my memory is the wonderful combination, correspondence, interplay of mind and body. His lithe, clean-cut figure, slim yet powerful, was the outward semblance and counterpart of his inner self. Courageous, restless, wiry, quick in body, he was fearless, inquisitive, challenging, subtle in mind. He constantly reminded me of the σκύλακες, the worrying puppies of the Platonic dialogue. And this remarkable fusion and unity of spiritual and physical qualities made me often think of him as "Greek," though I would not have ventured to say so to him: had I done so, I can hear his indignant snort. He might even have said, "Rot," and almost certainly, "Hoot man, just Scot"; but in his heart he would have thought it over indulgently, and understood that what I wanted to say was merely this: that the fine flower of youth is probably much alike, essentially, in all ages and in every clime, and that Greek youth has achieved immortality.

I do not think that Henry had a conscious instinct for the military career before he joined. "War and soldiering," he says of a friend, "were no more his nature than they were mine"; but these letters show him, quickly and to his own surprise, discovering his natural aptitude for that noble profession of arms which we are not yet past admiring in spite of all its inevitable concomitant horrors, and in spite of our Utopian

aspirations towards a blessed state of universal peace. It is this unsuspected aptitude, latent in so many of our young men, that led Moltke to reply—when some one remarked that the British were not a military race—“No, but very war-like.” The art of war, its problems of strategy and of tactics, embracing such ground factors as geography and implying historical studies, the profound humanity of soldiering with its elimination of artificial class-distinctions, its recognition of grit-worth as its sole distinction in all ranks, which ought to be, and sometimes is, the dominant ideal, appealed powerfully to his imagination, and satisfied his sense of reality. “The man’s the man for a’ that.” The conflict between this love of his profession and his revolt against the folly, waste, and uselessness of war, bit deeply into his soul, and make these letters both profoundly interesting psychologically and characteristic of the attitude of mind which must have largely prevailed among those fine spirits his contemporaries. Henry’s lucidity of thought and fairness of judgment, coupled with his artistic delight in the technique of his profession, led him to a generous acknowledgment of the quality of our foes in matters pertaining to the art of war.

Scotland and Eton were the “master lights of all his being, upheld him, cherished, and had power to” stir the deepest chords of his nature. “What a heritage!” he exclaims when thinking



of Eton ; and I can still hear the passionate devotion he threw into that blessed word "Gorgie."<sup>1</sup> Eton and Scotland gave him his friends in whom he was so rich, of whom he was so worthy : we know and feel through him "this leash of noble comrades" from whom he learned, to whom he taught that high conception of friendship which he expresses with so much beauty in his letters on the death of Ralph Gamble. "Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided."

*Ἀλκίμων σ', ὠριστοκλείδῃ, πρῶτον οἰκτείρω φίλῳ,  
ᾧλεσας δ' ἥβην, ἀμύνων πατρίδος δουληΐην.*<sup>2</sup>

HORATIO F. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> A characteristic quarter of Edinburgh, lying between Henry's home at Redhall and the City.

<sup>2</sup> First of my hero friends I mourn thee, Aristocleides ;  
Thou hast given the flower of thy life to shield thy land from the  
tyrant.



# HENRY DUNDAS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHILDHOOD.

HENRY DUNDAS<sup>1</sup> was born in Edinburgh on 5th February 1897. He was our only son.

It is not my object in the following pages to give more than a mere sketch of his childhood, and I only do that because after all the child is father of the man, and any record of him would be incomplete without it. Our family is well known and reputed in Scotland, and historians from Lord Woodhouselee to Lord Rosebery have paid it tribute. Its members have served their country for centuries in various walks of life, and assuming that a boy ever thinks of his ancestors, there was among Henry's none who had a career more likely to inspire his descendant than

<sup>1</sup> His full baptismal name was Henry Lancaster Nevill—the first two names after his maternal grandfather, the third after my maternal grandmother's family.

that other Henry Dundas, the friend and colleague of William Pitt. Of him it was said by a contemporary chronicler, "Henry Dundas . . . was the Pharos of Scotland. Who steered upon him was safe : who disregarded his light was wrecked."

But though through the generations there may have been transmitted to Henry much of the brain, the courage, and the "cutting edge" of his great-great-great-grandfather, he undoubtedly derived many of his qualities through his more immediate predecessors. His paternal grandfather, Canon Robert James Dundas of Albury, Surrey, died when his grandson was seven years old, and his lifelong friend, the late Bishop of Norwich, summarised his character after his death as follows : "He combined some of the best qualities of the Scotchman and the Englishman. He was shrewd, cautious, frank, open-hearted, genial, and full of humour. His laugh was a treat to hear. . . . His most striking characteristic appeared to me to be his absolute courage. If he thought that any one, no matter who, needed a rebuke, it never seemed to occur to him to flinch from the difficult and usually thankless duty of administering the proper reproof." That courage was manifestly a characteristic which descended to his grandson, and there is little difficulty in discerning in him also many traits which distinguished his other grandfather. Mr Henry Lancaster was a prominent and rapidly

rising member of the Scottish Bar, and had earned great repute as a most accomplished writer, when he died in 1875 at the age of forty-six. He was then in the plenitude of his powers, and a political life was just opening before him, in which he could not have failed to take a very high place.

Of him his friend Dr Jowett, the Master of Balliol, wrote as follows: "He came up from the University of Glasgow to Balliol College, Oxford, as a Snell Exhibitioner, in the year 1848, and he obtained a First Class in Easter 1853. Both at the University and in after life he had the faculty of drawing others round him by his vivacity and the geniality of his temperament. They were anxious to know what he had to say on any topic of the day. Every one was at ease with him: he could not only talk himself, but he made his companions talk by his great good humour and his quick appreciation of everything that was said to him. He may at times have been a little extravagant in his mirth; but where he was there was certainly no danger of dulness or ennui. Dr Johnson has said that 'every man may be judged of by his laughter,' and 'tried by his standard,' his biographer adds, 'he was himself by no means contemptible.' Those who knew our friend will have no difficulty in applying those words to him. Yet there was no time at which he was not a hard worker and in earnest about many things. He had great



political knowledge, and took a warm interest in several questions of the day."

From infancy Henry was a stirring child, and showed an early disposition to take charge in his nursery. Thus at the age of eighteen months he would reprove an indolent nurse in the morning with the exhortation, "Tick-a-tick, Nannie. Up, up." On the other hand, he showed his loyalty to her when, on the arrival a very few months later of the beloved nurse who was to be the friend of all his life,<sup>1</sup> he greeted her with the somewhat unpromising welcome of, "Beat new Nannie!" Most children, if parents are to be believed, have prodigious memories at an early age, so it is hardly worth recording that—the South African War having now started—he could sing "Rule Britannia" and the "Absent-minded Beggar" at the age of two.

From an early age he had a somewhat ribald vein of humour that found unholy delight in shocking people, and the fame of his retort to the clergyman at a party in Kirkcudbrightshire, to which his mother took him at the age of four, has found its way outside the family circle. "How old are you, little man?" demanded the kindly cleric. To which—in broad Scotch—came the unexpected reply, "I'm sixty-five and drunk every night."

It was natural that a person of his vigour and

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs Sophie Underwood, who was for ten years nurse to Henry and his sister Anne.

*joie de vivre* should be in considerable request at the children's parties of the period. He had the reputation from a very early age of being able to make things "go"—and not of course always by legitimate methods. A bride of last year may still remember a party of about sixteen years ago which took place at the house of Mrs Sellar—the doyenne of Edinburgh Society, though in spirit and mental vigour the contemporary of Henry—at which she (the bride) found herself deposited in the coal-box in the drawing-room, while Henry, the aggressor, followed the other children down to tea in the dining-room, and gratuitously "put up" a grace with all the unctuous piety of a Kruger.

Henry had as a small child a most undoubted aptitude for drawing, and I can remember a sort of Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Edinburgh, promoted by Professor Geddes and his friends of the "Outlook Tower," at which a book of his drawings at the age of seven or eight, lying beside those of a young draughtswoman who has now taken a leading place among Scottish artists, attracted great attention for their remarkably imaginative qualities and vigour.

He used to scribble away as the spirit moved him, reproducing scenes which were passing through his mind or about which he had recently read. But always he returned to his first love—express trains tearing through the country in what seemed in friendly eyes to be perfect per-

spective, masses of men in action, troops marching in close formation, hollow squares attacked by Afghans, or (perhaps with prophetic insight) "The Guard dies but does not surrender." After he became a schoolboy, however, he found little time or inclination for this work, though he could always give point to criticisms as to personal appearance or of some of the ungainly fashions of the day by ridiculous caricatures which touched the spot at once.

His mimicry, too, of style and tone was remarkable from a very early age. I remember once, when staying with him (aged four or five) at Arniston, stopping short outside the house, being puzzled to hear issuing from one of the upper windows a male voice of considerable power. The voice went on and on in a sing-song manner, and I came to the conclusion—improbable as it seemed—that a prayer-meeting must be taking place in those regions. Immediately afterwards I went up to his nursery, and was startled to find him in his nurse's nightgown upon a table declaiming to an admiring congregation of the servants a sermon in the manner of the parish minister. This was the first time I had come across this particular accomplishment of his, but in later years many an after-dinner audience at Brigade Headquarters or elsewhere in France was diverted by similar performances.

In these later years Henry wrote from France,



“The ‘guid auld Scotland’ feeling is really the dominant note in my life, I think.” The feeling was inherent in him, and showed itself from the very first in his love of his home and of the people of every class. For the first seven years of his life he spent a month or six weeks every autumn in my old home in Surrey, where his grandparents delighted in him. During one of these visits he went with his nurse to spend a few days with her brother at Farnborough. The soldiers at Aldershot were the great attraction there, but specially the Scots Guards; and after marching with them one day he remarked to his hostess, “I shall come clanking up your garden path a General one day, Mrs Woods.” But the happiest days were those when he returned to our house in Edinburgh, to his nursery and his books, and to the companionship of his devoted cousin Rosalind Grant, three years his senior, and his inseparable friend in every kind of childish fun and mischief. He loved the Scotch names after the English ones, the streets and shops of Edinburgh and the people who inhabited them, and he had friends in every class. On certain days he would be sent to have his French lessons at a friend’s house. On one occasion he was late in turning up, and was observed driving the cart of “Willie, the Milkman,” with two urchins sitting by his side and directing the operations. On another occasion he was discovered turning

the handle of a barrel-organ in the middle of the street while the old man stood beside with extended hat. A picture of him is also recalled on a day when his nurse left him to have his music lesson in a room in the music-shop of Messrs Methven & Simpson in Princes Street. On returning at the appointed hour, she found a crowd gathered before one of the large front windows of the shop, and upon the platform inside she beheld her charge performing the sword-dance—a newly acquired art—with perfect sang-froid, before an amused audience.

But whether in Edinburgh in winter or at North Berwick in the spring, where we had our other home, or during the happy summers that we spent in Galloway or Roxburghshire with my mother-in-law, it was always the same. Henry imbibed the genius of the place, and was on the best possible terms with all who were kind to him—and who could not be? His love of the people, their interests and their sports, was absolutely genuine. Scottish League football and the prowess of “Bobby Walker,” “Jimmy Quin,” and their successors were matters of even greater moment to him through all his boyhood than the *personalia* of English County Cricket and Test Matches—though in this department too his attention to detail was quite unrivalled; and in France many an uncomfortable hour was whiled away in discussions with his platoon as to the

rival merits of "Hairts" and "Hibs" and "Celtic" and "Rangers." It was this sympathy and spirit of brotherhood which made him so beloved by soldiers. Many an officer who loves his men, and will spare no pains to acquire their confidence and ensure their wellbeing, may fail to achieve his purpose because there is, despite himself, a certain artificiality in his methods. He will put on the nicest possible manner, but the manner *is* put on—sometimes with a dash of patronage, sometimes with an obvious effort. Henry had no such difficulty to contend with. He had to put on no manner, because it was all natural to him; and though a martinet in the cause of discipline and efficiency, his men felt instinctively that here was a man who was truly one of themselves, who would spare no pains to see that they got their due so far as it was in his power to help them, and who himself felt a spirit of personal aggravation when want of consideration, thoughtless or otherwise, was shown to them.

In the autumn of 1906, when he was nine and a half, Henry went to Horris Hill, where he remained till the summer of 1910.

The life of a private schoolboy is uneventful, and no description can make it interesting to any but those of the boy's immediate home circle. Henry, with his quick and receptive mind, learnt an immense amount during his four years, and

ended his career there as Head of the school. He was captain of the football eleven during the last winter, and was probably the best bat in a strong cricket eleven, which generally won its matches against the five or six other schools it played. And little wonder, for Horris Hill must surely have had one of the best cricket grounds among all the private schools in England, and incomparably the best coach in its Headmaster, Mr A. H. Evans.

When the time came for Henry to go to Eton, three young cousins of my own, Robin Dundas,<sup>1</sup> Harry Moseley,<sup>2</sup> and Jack Haldane,<sup>3</sup> had recently completed or were just completing distinguished school careers in College. For our own part we had decided that Henry was likely to do better for various reasons in a House than in College, though we were anxious if possible that he should win a Scholarship.

It was a great satisfaction to us therefore when, in spite of the lack of Eton Scholarship tradition at Horris Hill,<sup>4</sup> Henry took eleventh place in the 1910 election, and his place would no doubt have been higher if he had made a study of Latin Verse Composition, which plays so large a part in the Eton curriculum, but which

<sup>1</sup> Scholar of New College and now Senior Censor at Christchurch.

<sup>2</sup> Scholar of Trinity, Oxford. Killed in Gallipoli.

<sup>3</sup> Scholar and Fellow of New College ; Captain of the School, 1911.

<sup>4</sup> The winning of one or two Scholarships at Winchester was a matter of yearly occurrence.



is a form of mental gymnastics for which Henry—notwithstanding a strong scholarly bent—never had any affection or special aptitude.

The story of his career at Eton is told in another chapter by his tutor, Mr Marten. His love of his school was among the principal inspirations of his life. His last letter to us as a schoolboy was as follows :—

“ETON SOCIETY,  
*Monday, 26th July 1915.*

“ Well, well. The last letter from the old Boys’ Club—as a present number of that august body. To-morrow I tool up to London, dressed as an Old Etonian—and so closes a long and not uneventful chapter. I have finished up by annexing the First Oppidan Prize in this July thing, which is quite good. The two Scholarships went to Caroe and Rhys-Davids, as was expected.

“ Last night I made £8 out of my auction, and several things more to be sold to-night. Not utterly bad. Thanks a thousand times for the pelf. The ‘ Chronicle ’ paid Brown’s all right.

“ Eton has never looked more delightful than she does to-night after a week’s continuous down-pour. We have had a lovely day to-day, and the sun is shining and the grass is green and everything looks entrancing.

“ For the first time I am feeling really frenzied with the War, and one thinks of old Alick.<sup>1</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> Alick Crum Ewing, his friend and golfing rival since childhood, and a year older than himself, had joined the 3rd Seaforth Highlanders within a week of the declaration of war. He was at Cromarty till 29th November, when he left for France, where he was attached to a battalion of the Camerons. He was reported wounded and missing on 22nd December 1914, and he must have laid down his life on that day.

unearthed several letters from him to-day. The one about his going down to Perth to enlist with two ghillies, a footman and chauffeur. 'Quite feudal, sir,' as Dr Johnson would have remarked. He had a tremendous and eminently Scottish sense of humour. Dear old Alick.

"Tim Hope has been in great form. We had a lunch in the guard-room. He, Willie,<sup>1</sup> Geoff Wallington<sup>2</sup>—such a nice boy—and myself,—great fun. On Saturday Tim came down to tea with Geoff and me. Must fly to absence. Will continue afterwards. . . . Well, last absence over. The worst part is bidding farewell to all these countless boys. But that's the great thing about the Guards—being down here, we shall all meet again so very shortly.

"But I hope I shall never show myself forgetful of the debt I owe you, darling Daddy and Mummy, for letting me come here at all. That is one of the lessons this place teaches one—the inestimable value of sympathetic parents. I can't say more than thank you for everything from the very bottom of my heart.

"The Eleven are playing the West Kent Yeomanry on Wednesday and Thursday, so I shall go over from Fairlawne with Teenie,<sup>3</sup> so it is not altogether good-bye except to Alan,<sup>4</sup> and Guido,<sup>5</sup> and the wet bobs and the Collegers.

"Farewell. Yours with love,

H."

When the War came, and it was clear to all

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Edmonstone, Coldstream Guards. Killed September 1916.

<sup>2</sup> G. S. Wallington, K.R.R.C. Killed 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Victor A. Cazalet, M.C., Household Battalion.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Lubbock, K.S. (Royal Artillery).

<sup>5</sup> A. G. Salisbury Jones, M.C., Coldstream Guards (twice wounded).

schoolboys of a certain age that they would be called on to bear an active part in it, Henry at once signified his intention of applying for a commission in the Scots Guards. None of his nearest relatives were or had ever been in the Army, but for an Eton boy the matter was easy to arrange. Moreover, my late cousin, Sir Robert Dundas of Arniston, had commanded the same Left Flank Company of the First Battalion which was afterwards to be Henry's own; and his friend, Colonel Henry Fludyer, then Colonel of the Regiment, had special pleasure in procuring a commission in the Regiment for Henry. It was also arranged that Henry should have quarters in Wellington Barracks during the period of his training, and he went into residence there in September 1915, having obtained his commission in the previous month. In the earlier years of the war the preliminary training was much more superficial than it afterwards became, when boys went for a considerable period as Cadets to the Guards Training School at Bushey; and indeed but for two or three weeks "on the square," when he first joined, he had no infantry training with men until he went down to Corsham for a month's course in the following spring, immediately before being sent out to France. Fortunately for him and his physical and moral welfare, he showed early proficiency in bombing during a few days' course at Marden Park at the end

of September, and for practically the whole winter he was detailed as an instructor at the Guards Bombing-School at Southfields near Wimbledon, which kept him reasonably and usefully occupied during the greater part of the day.

Those winter months were perhaps the happiest time of his life, for Eton remained his playground, and between his old friends there and a rapidly increasing circle in London, time never lay heavy on his hands; and in periodical intervals between two bombing courses he would invariably come down to Scotland for a week-end.

Not having his own rooms in London, he made a second home of the house of our dear friend Miss Julia Grant, with whom her niece Rosalind (his cousin) was living while occupied with war-work at Carlton House Terrace, and never was a boy more happy in his choice of companions. A great attraction about Henry was his capacity for infecting his elders with enthusiasm, and many were the adventures in which Miss Grant and others found themselves his partners and confederates—upon which it is highly unlikely they would have embarked if left to themselves. Among these were constant pilgrimages to all sorts of suburban districts in search of Gilbert and Sullivan Opera, for which he had an amazing and wholly justifiable cult. The D'Oyly Carte Company were that winter playing a three-months' season within



the metropolitan area, and there must be many people who will look back to the single visit of their lifetime to such theatres as Hammer-smith, Kennington, Wimbledon, Holloway, or Stratford as associated with a party of which Henry was the cicerone, and where his face was as well known to all the members of the company as that of any London critic of recognised importance.

He could, of course, have passed the stiffest of examinations with full marks upon the text of all Gilbert's operas, and there was probably no single tune of Sullivan's—nor line of recitative—which he could not place. His love for the operas had shown itself from an early age, and as was his wont, he had mastered the subject thoroughly, as was shown by his choice of books.

During his years at Horris Hill and Eton—and almost entirely during the latter period—he had amassed a library of sixty-eight prize books. Among these were of course Cory's 'Ionica,' and such standard Scotch works as Scott's 'Life and Poetry,' Stevenson, Aytoun's 'Lays,' and Burns. There were also, as one might expect, Lives of Disraeli, Gladstone, Lord R. Churchill, Stonewall Jackson (a special hero), Lee, Nelson, Chatham, Napoleon and his Marshals, Bismarck, and Dr Johnson. But there were also such books as 'Pepys's Diary' (his Brinckman Divinity Prize at the age of thirteen!), Hutchin-

son's 'Golf and Golfers,' in which an admirable portrait (well thumbed) of his uncle, Tom Boothby, figures—and Gilbert's 'Comic Operas,' Gilbert and Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte, and the 'Bab Ballads.' Surely some of these books cannot often have appeared in the Eton prize-binding, stamped with the School coat-of-arms !

No sketch of Henry, however slight, could omit some reference to his voracity as a reader. He had an extraordinary memory, which enabled him seemingly to remember all that he read, and a surprising power of concentration, which left him when so employed wholly unaffected by and oblivious to his surroundings. After leaving school he was seldom to be found without a book in his pocket—as often as not, a book of verse or an anthology. To this he would have recourse on all sorts of unexpected occasions—when standing at a street corner waiting for a friend to keep an appointment—in the waiting-room at a restaurant—or even sometimes, it must be admitted, in company when the conversation did not interest him. A chaplain told us how much he had been struck on the first occasion that he met him by seeing how imperturbably he sat reading a French book in the mess-room while conversation buzzed around, and by his admirably terse criticism of the book when eventually he shut it and joined in the general talk. The circulating libraries were constantly under con-

tribution while he was in France. Historical works, biographies, and books of literary criticism were his principal stand-by. In lighter literature Stephen Leacock and Harry Graham were the humourists who probably most tickled his fancy (if we except W. S. Gilbert, whom he knew by heart); and he was a fervent admirer of the stories of Sir A. Conan Doyle, P. G. Wodehouse, and others.

His days in London were never dull. He was fortunate in having steady daily occupation at the Southfields Bombing-School, and many were the Guardsmen—officers and men—who passed through the hands of their young but capable instructors. Released from there, he came with the greater zest to the amenities of social life which awaited him wherever he sought them, and in his leisure moments he was as likely to be found in the London Library as in the Guards Club, or among our contemporaries as among his own.

The freshness and originality of his views, and his ease and courage in expressing them, together with the critical interest he took in every conceivable subject of current importance, made him a welcome companion in a diversity of circles, and he enjoyed his successes with simplicity and *naïveté*. Moreover, that natural sense of perspective, which in his nursery had enabled him to draw with realism trains and moving columns, did not desert him: he had a sense

of proportion developed in a high degree, and he never lost his balance nor allowed popularity to turn his head. He was of course pleased—as how should a boy in his teens not be?—when he was conscious of attracting a clever man or a charming woman by his wit and conversational powers. Thus I can remember when he came home for a few days of leave at Christmas, the quizzical look he gave me when he showed me a book sent to him by a famous literary and art critic (since dead), upon the front page of which was written, “To Henry Dundas, the critic and statesman of the future (1925), from his sincere friend and admirer.” But he never dwelt on these things, nor sought out opportunities of getting into the limelight. Until he left Eton he had seldom been in London except during long leaves; yet after his six months at Wellington Barracks it is probably no exaggeration to say that no boy of his age knew it better or had a wider circle of friends.

But the time passed all too quickly, and after a month's field-training at Corsham in the spring he went to France in May 1916.



## CHAPTER II.

## HENRY DUNDAS AT ETON.

BY MR C. H. K. MARTEN.

I. THE FIRST THREE YEARS, SEPTEMBER 1910  
TO DECEMBER 1913.

BEFORE Henry Dundas arrived at Eton, his parents had to decide whether to send him to College as a King's Scholar or to a Master's house as an Oppidan, his name having been down for my own House for some years. Henry had passed eleventh into College in the College Examination of 1910; his parents, however, putting on one side the considerable financial considerations involved, had determined to do what was thought best for their boy. In College there are seventy King's Scholars, elected as a result of a stiff competitive examination, and therefore all intelligent and some very clever. For such an intellectual atmosphere with the invigoration that comes from competing brains there was much to be said. In any one of the twenty-six Oppidan Houses, on the other hand, the intellectual standard is, of course, very much

lower. But in such a House Henry would have the advantage of meeting a greater variety of boys; and the general outlook of an Oppidan is, not infrequently, wider than that of a Collegier. The parents eventually decided in favour of an Oppidan House, and this, if it was Henry's loss, was at any rate his House Master's gain. Henry, however, all through his Eton life had so many intimate friends in College that, to a large extent, he enjoyed the advantages of both societies.

The new world of Eton, to which Henry was introduced in September 1910, has often been compared to a university rather than to a school. The spacious dignity of its buildings and of its grounds, its Chapel and its Cathedral Service, its traditions of liberty and the independence of its members, all give that impression. Its vast numbers again—over 1100 at the present time—make the various Houses in which the boys are lodged more like little Colleges, each with its own individuality and traditions, and the members of each during the earlier period, at all events, of a boy's Eton career, keeping very much together. In the supervision of these Houses an Eton Master has three advantages not always enjoyed at other schools. In the first place, his numbers are not too large or too small; no House has less than thirty-six boys nor more than forty-two. In the second place, the boys are put down for a House Master (often



soon after they are born), and not for the building in which he happens to reside ; and the House Master has absolute control over his own list. Many of the boys may be the sons or connections of a House Master's own contemporaries at Eton or the university, and an Eton House often bears something of the character of a family party. In the third place, each boy has a separate room ; and there is an excellent custom at Eton whereby House Masters wander round their Houses during the hour between Evening Prayers and Lights-Out, when every boy has to be in his own room, and the House Master thus gets an opportunity of seeing a boy by himself and without formality. But, of course, the care of some forty boys who are passing through the difficult and varied stages from childhood at twelve or thirteen to manhood at eighteen or nineteen must be an arduous and anxious undertaking for any one, especially where such a large amount of liberty is allowed as at Eton, and the boys themselves, as a result of their home surroundings, are so independent ; and the youthful Henry, in the course of his career, was to provide for his House Master along with many delights some measure of small anxieties.

An Eton boy fulfils the condition of Aristotle, that he should learn to obey before he begins to govern. On his arrival he has to "fag" so long as he is a Lower Boy. The duration of his exist-

ence as a Lower Boy depends upon his intellect—it may be a year, or two years, or even nearly three years. Then follows a period of some two years when he neither “fags” nor is “fagged.” After that he is allowed “to fag”; and if and when he becomes a member of the “Library,” he is allowed to call “Boy”—in other words, boys have to run to find him when he wants something done instead of his having to find some “Lower Boy.” Henry Dundas, it need scarcely be said, had the shortest possible time as a fag, and the longest possible as a fag-master.

The government of an Eton House varies considerably in detail in different Houses, and there is no absolutely fixed or stereotyped system. In my own House the government is a mixture of that of Miss Evans’s, at which House I was a boy, and of my predecessor Mr Radcliffe, from whom I originally took over the boys in my House; and as they were undoubtedly two of the best Houses at Eton, I felt I could not do better than follow their example.<sup>1</sup> The governing body of the House is “the Library,” of some four to seven members. The official members of the Library are—first, the Captain of the House. He was appointed by me; he is usually, though by no means invariably, the boy highest

<sup>1</sup> I remember when I was a boy at Eton, a boy in Miss Evans’s House was rash enough to say that he would prefer to be in Mr Radcliffe’s House to being in Miss Evans’s; this opinion, though a tribute to Mr Radcliffe, was hotly resented, it is needless to say, at “My Dame’s.”

up in the School order. He was the boy primarily responsible for the welfare of the House, and this is the position which Henry was to occupy during his last year at Eton. Secondly, there was the Captain of the Games, appointed by the out-going Captain. Thirdly, there was the President of the Library, elected by the Debating Society—a very useful office to provide for some outstanding personality who holds neither of the two other positions. Sometimes the three offices were held by three different persons, sometimes a pluralist would hold them all—as in Henry's first summer, when Geoffrey Colman, who but for the War would have been Captain of the Oxford University Eleven at Lord's in the summer of 1915, was the chief personality in the House. The other members of the Library were co-opted. It was before the Library that offenders were brought after Evening Prayers. Their cases were heard, their excuses considered, and if necessary the supreme penalty of the law was enforced—and Henry, so far as my memory serves, was to suffer on more than one occasion. Below the Library was the "Debating Society," election to which gave the right to sit at certain hours in the Boys' Library, and was regarded as the first step in the ladder of promotion in the House. The members of this Society, some fourteen in number (including the Library), were elected by ballot.

It may be asked where the House Master appears in the government of his House. In my own case he is somewhat in the position of the Crown, which, according to Mr Bagehot's immortal work on the British Constitution, has three rights—the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, and the right to warn. A House Master also has a veto on the supreme penalty of the law—indeed he is in a curious position of not being able to exercise that power himself, but of his leave having to be obtained by the Captain of the House before the rod can be used which prevents the spoiling of the child. But personally I have seldom interfered, believing that, as was the case at Miss Evans's, where leave was never asked, substantial justice is as a rule done. And, of course, in any important matter, *le dernier mot* which, according to a French historian, is the ultimate test of sovereignty, must rest with the House Master, though in my own case it has been very seldom uttered.

How did Henry Dundas get on in this new world in which he found himself during the first three and a half years of his school life, September 1910–December 1913, which we may take as the first period of his Eton career? With the Upper Boys he got on, so far as they saw anything of him, well. They saw the promise of the future in him; moreover, he could be relied on when they were bored to give them a



Lauder song. But it must be confessed that with some of his own more immediate contemporaries during the earlier part of his Eton life he was not at all times over-popular. To begin with, boys such as he go soaring up the House and the School; they lose touch with those of their own age, and it is hardly in human nature that they should be popular with rather older boys who are being supplanted in House and School order. Moreover, the process of "growing up" in the case of boys of such abnormal activities as those of Henry is a difficult one. Your boy poet may be morose and "touchy"; the boy of Henry's type, on the other hand, is apt to appear to be a trifle conceited, exuberant, tactless, and his self-consciousness will take the form, not of shyness, but of forcing himself into the centre of the picture. And even his intellectual restlessness is exhausting to growing boys. "Henry Dundas," said one of his contemporaries to me at the end of his second year, "is all right; but you must not have too much of him at a time." Henry's many good qualities, however—his good nature, his real though not always apparent modesty, his sympathy—were soon to show themselves, and these qualities, combined with his wit and readiness and his proficiency in everything he took up, gained him a large acquaintance and many friends.

But we must turn from the House to other



aspects of Henry's career during his first three and a half years at Eton. And first intellectual. At Eton every boy has, besides his House Tutor, a Classical or Modern Tutor. When a boy first comes to Eton, he has a Classical Tutor; if and when he branches in later school life to some modern subject, he often changes to a Modern Tutor. In Houses held by Classical Masters the House Tutor and the Classical Tutor are usually one and the same person, but in other Houses they are not. In the old days, when the Eton Houses were largely held by ladies, the position of the Classical Tutor was all-important. At the present time, when all Houses are held by Masters, the position of the Classical Tutor is not, of course, except in the case of the King's Scholars, what it was. But he is primarily responsible for the boy's work, and the House Tutor and the Classical Tutor generally consult on most matters concerning the boy's welfare. Henry's Classical Tutor was R. S. Durnford, or, as we called him, "Dick." Steeped in Eton traditions,<sup>1</sup> a good scholar, a capable athlete, Dick was personally one of the most equable, good-tempered, and lovable of men. Henry

<sup>1</sup> His grandfather and grand-uncle, the one Bishop of Chichester and the other Lower Master and Fellow of Eton, were Old Etonians, as were his father, his uncle (Provost of King's), and two of his brothers. His great-grandfather on his mother's side was the famous Dr Keate.

could not have been more fortunate ; for Dick, though alive to Henry's superficial faults, saw the promise of the future, and had the most important of gifts—sympathy and patience. When the War came, however, in 1914, Dick was one of the first to go. I remember him now with tears in his eyes coming to tell me he had decided to join up in one of Kitchener's earliest battalions—tears not of fear of what was coming, but of regret for what he was giving up ; for we both knew—though the thought was unexpressed—how uncertain were his chances of returning to the work and place he loved so well.

In Dick Durnford's pupil-room the chief companions of Henry Dundas were Arthur Pitman and Wernher. Arthur Pitman was also in my House, a most cheery sunny boy with a competent brain and gifted with a directness and frankness of speech which was pleasing if occasionally embarrassing. Neighbours in Edinburgh, in the same House and the same pupil-room, Henry and Arthur were naturally thrown a good deal together. They were of different temperaments ; of different gifts—Arthur excelling with the brush, Henry with the pen ; of different occupations—Arthur, as was fitting with one of his family, being a Wet-Bob and securing his Eight, and Henry being a Dry-Bob who ought to have got his Eleven. And yet they were always good

friends, if occasionally conscious, as boys, and still more grown-up people in small societies are apt to be, of each other's failings. Wernher, Henry's chief intellectual rival, was a most remarkable boy. In any examination he could beat any of his contemporaries of his age, including the Collegers. I remember the late Vice-Provost of Eton, Mr Rawlins, saying almost with despair, that it was impossible to give him anything but a hundred marks out of a hundred for a Latin translation; and Sir Richard Lodge of Edinburgh, who examined him in History, was greatly impressed by his remarkable mastery of the facts of the Reformation period in European History. I have never come across a boy in my experience—which is now rather a long one—who could, apparently without effort, master a complicated period with greater ease or write upon it with more unfailing lucidity. His writing lacked the liveliness that Henry would give to an answer, but then Wernher never omitted any material point. And now all four of these friends, each so full of promise, have gone from us. Dick was killed in an attack near Hoge in 1915; Wernher fell in one of the last offensives of the Somme in '16; Arthur Pitman was "missing" with his aeroplane, his final fate unknown, in the early part of '18; and Henry was killed on the Canal du Nord in the last phase of the War.

Henry's intellectual successes began at once.

Lord Rosebery, the most distinguished of Eton's living historians, had just given a sum of money to found prizes at Eton for the encouragement of History. The prizes were allocated, one for competition amongst Lower Boys, and the other for those at the top of the School. Henry as a Lower Boy in his first Half competed and obtained one of the two prizes: it was peculiarly appropriate that the prize given by Pitt's Scottish biographer should go, on this its first presentation, to the great-great-great-grandson of Pitt's chief Scottish ally, Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville. That same Half, Henry obtained the Brinckman Divinity Prize, and by the end of his second year at Eton he had taken a "Trials Prize" and various "Distinctions in Trials," as well as the School Certificate which exempted him from any University Entrance Examination. The next four Halves of his career, September 1912–December 1913, were spent, two of them "up" to the present Vice-Provost, Mr Macnaghten, and the others "up" to the late Vice-Provost, Mr Rawlins, one an ex-Fellow of Trinity and the other of King's, and deservedly reputed to be the two best teachers in the School. With the end of 1913 Classics ceased to be the staple of Henry's education, and we may appropriately end with two extracts from Classical reports. One is from Mr Booker, to whom he was "up" in the summer of 1912:—



“ CLASSICAL REPORT FOR SUMMER SCHOOL-TIME,  
1912.

“ *Name* : . . . DUNDAS, O. S.

“ *Place* : . . . 4th.

“ An exceedingly sharp youth—almost too sharp for the peace of mind of his division-master, whom he bombards with volleys of incisive, and often awkward questions ! But underneath this inquisitiveness, I am afraid, there is some lack of thoroughness. Careless blunders mar his compositions, and a meticulous study like Greek accentuation is beneath his contempt. There is no doubt a fascination in watching the agility of his mind, but he has the defects of his qualities. R. P. L. BOOKER.”

And the other is from Mr Macnaghten in the Michaelmas Term of the same year :—

“ CLASSICAL REPORT FOR MICHAELMAS SCHOOL-TIME, 1912.

“ Dundas is an excellent boy, as keen as mustard, and willing to take any amount of pains. He is also very intelligent, and takes considerable interest in all his work. Unfortunately he breaks down in verse composition, and that is my only reason for not sending him up for good. I am really sorry to have to disappoint him ; but when I looked through all the verses I had kept throughout the Half there was no copy of his forthcoming, and indeed



he has only once got more than half marks. His Iambics are on the same low level—Greek Prose and Latin Prose are both much better, but there was no copy of either sufficiently good to merit sending up. English Essays and history are strong points: he has latterly done very well in construing; and throughout he has been a lively and appreciative member of the division. High spirits not always kept in control before my entry can hardly be reckoned against him—a most promising friendly boy.

H. MACNAGHTEN.”

In athletics, Henry was meanwhile during these three and a half years making his mark. In his very first summer—the summer of 1911—the House won the Junior Cricket Cup. It is no exaggeration to say that Eton cricket has been transformed during the last twenty-five years by the introduction of the “League System” for “Dry-Bobs” under sixteen. The twenty-six Houses are divided into two Leagues, the thirteen Houses in each League play every other House, and then the leaders of each League play each other for the Cup. When I was a boy I remember the listless slack games of cricket boys of under sixteen used to play; now, when these matches are in progress, one sees little groups of partisans dotted over the vast extent of Agar’s Plough watching with unremitting interest the fortunes of the games. The matches are just long enough. Scores of over 100 for an innings are infrequent,

those of under 50 quite common ; 3 to 5 hours' cricket sees, as a rule, the match over.

In the particular year 1915 my House headed one League with a record of 13 matches played and 13 won ; and it then beat the leading House of the other League by an innings and 67 runs. In these successes the protagonists were Lord Francis Hill, Eric Anson,<sup>1</sup> and Henry Dundas. When our opponents were in, those three between them got rid of most of the side. Henry was a safe wicket-keeper, Hill and Anson brilliant slips. Anson used to bowl at one end with Hill at slip ; and the next over was *vice versa*. With small boys' cricket the number of slip and wicket catches given is remarkable ; and a look through the lists of the old matches shows how often the best bats among our opponents succumbed either to one or the other. We always put our opponents in first on principle, generally got them out cheaply, and then went in ourselves. At the beginning of the season Hill made the most prodigious number of runs, and after the first few matches had an average of something over 200. When he failed, Anson and Dundas made runs ;<sup>2</sup> and if all three failed—as happened very seldom—the tail would wag effectively, as

<sup>1</sup> Eric Anson made at Lord's, in the Eton and Harrow Match of 1914, the winning stroke—a boundary for 4—off the last ball bowled in this match for five years.

<sup>2</sup> The respective averages of the three at the end of the year were 67—33—25.

it did in the Final Match, when the first 5 wickets went down for 59 and yet the total reached 150. Henry was splendidly keen in all these matches, and eventually wrote an account of them with full details and a commentary, and a final summing up of the season. It was written on twenty-four large pages of foolscap, and then presented to me—and for a boy of fifteen it was written with an astonishing amount of vividness and vitality.

In the next year, 1912, Henry Dundas was Captain of the Junior Eleven, and got his Upper Sixpenny—*i.e.*, the best Eleven in the School of those under sixteen; and in the following year he got his Lower Club—*i.e.*, the best Eleven of those a year older. To Eton football he did not take very kindly; but he was very promising at Rugby, and in the Lent School-time of 1913, when just over sixteen, he made his first appearance for the School Fifteen.

## II. JANUARY 1914–JULY 1915.

We now come to the second stage of Henry's career at Eton—the year and a half from January 1914 to July 1915—and here some explanation is necessary of Eton studies. The whole curriculum has been transformed in the last quarter of a century. When I was a boy at Eton, and even when in 1895 I came back as a Master, the staple of education throughout the School was Latin

and Greek, with the exception of a certain number who took up German for Greek, and those who belonged to the Army Class. That Latin and Greek still occupy a predominant position throughout a boy's life at Eton is still, I observe, held by educational "experts" who write to the papers, and by not a few Old Etonians. It is therefore not out of place to say that at the present time more than half the boys in the School never study the Greek language at all at any period of their career. Those judged of linguistic promise, however, some 40 per cent to 45 per cent, study Greek for at least two years, and most of them continue to do so, at any rate, till somewhere between the ages of sixteen and seventeen and a half, when they obtain the School Certificate.<sup>1</sup> Henry was, of course, one of the clever ones, and he continued, by my advice and Dick's, to make Classics his chief study for a year and a half after he had passed the Certificate Examination successfully, as he was then so very young.

When a boy has secured a School Certificate he is allowed to "specialise"—specialisation is allowed in a modified form before this, but not in the full form until the Certificate is over. Then a boy may take up either Classics, or

<sup>1</sup> An experiment is now being tried with some of these boys of giving up Latin, but continuing with Greek when they reach a certain position in the School.



Mathematics, or Science, or Modern Languages, or History, as his chief subject, or he may belong to a general Division and enjoy a more varied diet composed of a mixture of Classics, History, Science, and French. A goodly number of boys choose History, which, of course, for those with political traditions behind them, is a very congenial subject.<sup>1</sup> In some School stories I observe that the History specialist is depicted as a kind of gilded youth who takes up History frankly as a soft option. I will not deny that there may be some of this particular variety at Eton, but the historians at Eton have always included a number of able boys with fresh and active minds. My colleagues (Mr G. W. Headlam and Mr C. H. Blakiston) and I myself, who have been responsible for the historians, have always, however, been against excessive and undue specialisation. The historians spend a quarter of their school hours over languages, either Classics, German, Latin, or French. Moreover, they take up other subjects, such as Civics or Economics, Geography or English, so that considerably less than half their school hours are directed exclusively to History. My own endeavour has always been to interest the boys by taking up some period in detail, and to

<sup>1</sup> At present (October 1920) the number of historians is forty-nine. There has always been a certain solidarity and *esprit de corps* among the History specialists at Eton, and indeed they have reached such a pitch of insolence that they have, using the phraseology of the day, arrogated to themselves the title of "super-specialists."



teach them by essays and by questions how to use their facts for purposes of argument and illustration, and to write their own language lucidly and, if possible, attractively. The lot of a teacher trying to interest boys of seventeen or eighteen in the study of History is indeed an enviable one; he might well hesitate, to parody Gibbon's phrase, to exchange his invincible love of teaching such boys for all the wealth of the Indies—and of all boys, perhaps Eton boys are the most rewarding, in this subject at any rate, to teach.

From the moment that Henry came to Eton there was never any doubt as to what subject he would eventually take up. He was no Classical scholar in the strict sense of that word; and both his Latin and Greek Composition were below scholarship form. But, on the other hand, he was keenly interested in History, and had just the mind for it. To begin with, like Macaulay, he had a most remarkable capacity, almost a voracity for detail. When he was a young boy at Eton he knew not only all the teams in the Scottish Football League and their places in it, but even each individual member by name and his position in the football field. Later on, golf records became his hobby, and it was impossible to "stump" him in the performances of any professional, more particularly if he was a Scot. From these he branched to Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, which he knew practically by heart, and

the person who bet Henry a franc on a Gilbert and Sullivan quotation (Letters, p. 77) was as ill-advised as Walpole who, it will be remembered, lost his guinea to Pulteney over a quotation from Horace. In the second place, Henry possessed a remarkably clear head, and when he came to the serious study of History was always master of his details. The more complicated the period the more he enjoyed it. I remember doing with him in particular the reign of Charles II., perhaps the most complicated in English History, and the history of the Italian States, 1494-1516, a perfect maze of changing personalities and politics. I had to do that particular period of Italian History for my Schools at Oxford, and very difficult I found it. But Henry succeeded without difficulty in mastering the intricate family and political relationships of the many families, such as the Medici, Sforza, and the House of Anjou, and in tracing the endless succession of leagues these families formed against each other in turn. Thirdly, Henry delighted in the study of human personality. The characters of past times had a never-failing attraction for him, and essays on such people were amongst the best he ever did. Fourthly, Henry had in his writing, if a certain exuberance, also great vitality and "go," and his writing was full of that indefinable "promise" which Oxford examiners look for in their History scholars.

Henry had, in his year and a half as a History specialist, some able boys in his Division, such as Impey, the Brackenbury scholar of Balliol, who wrote as a boy in a style so mature that his English master put his work in a different class from that of any one else; Dickinson, who was later to fly over Constantinople in the War, and who was able to aim his bombs with greater precision because of the plan of the city he had studied with his Classical Tutor while at Eton; Browne, Scholar of Magdalene, Cambridge, who was to lose his leg on his first day in the battle-field; Blacker, a very able boy killed in the War; Cazalet, the friend of us all; and of course the unconquerable Wernher.

But to Henry Dundas himself, however, the first Half of 1914 was memorable, probably not so much because he became a History specialist, but because he was a member of the Eton Rugby Fifteen which succeeded in defeating Wellington. Rugby Football is only played by a few of the Upper Boys at Eton for part of one Half in the year, whilst it is the School game at Wellington. That School very kindly gave us a match every year, and almost invariably a very considerable beating. But in this particular year we had the advantage of a deluge of rain—"the rain came down in buckets"—as on the day before the battle of Waterloo. Such rain which, according to modern French historians, proved, by delaying

Napoleon's advance the next day, to be the salvation of Wellington on the battlefield of Waterloo, was on this occasion the ruin of the school called after his name. It enabled the Etonians to convert the game into a kind of Eton dribbling game, and to snatch a victory by 9 points to 3. It is a curious example of the weakness of human nature, that all of us, however old we may be, look upon a game which we have won by some amazing "fluke" as a well-merited success. Henry's letter to his father on the match, which, as being an historic occasion, is printed below, would not be less enthusiastic if an older person had been the victor and the writer, and not a boy of barely seventeen. Wellington boys who may happen to read it will no doubt feel that they need not grudge, after their many victories, this modest success to Eton, and its perhaps exuberant celebration—for it has so far been the only, and may well prove to be the last, success that falls to Eton's lot.

"DARLING DADDY,—The greatest triumph of the century! We have beaten Wellington by 3 tries to one. It really was a grand performance. I will now proceed to narrate in detail: On Thursday we played New College, on a wet day and a wet ground, and we got beaten by 27-0. Not very encouraging. New were very good: strong and big in the scrum. We only got the ball twice the whole match—and very fast and clever behind, led by W. G. K. Boswell, who got



four tries himself. Well, on Friday afternoon we had a mild practice, scrums, tackling, kicking, &c., then on Saturday morning we went round to Kindersley's, and he gave us some last words of advice. Rain began about 10 and continued off and on all the morning, so by the time of kick off, 3, the ground was like a bog. We took the Field as follows :—

J. G. Frere,

A. R. Cooper, G. E. Younghusband, G. D. Pape, and L. E. C. Dale Lace.

A. S. Belmont, H. L. Dundas,

S. I. Fairbairn, I. P. R. Napier, J. Scudamore, D. C. Cayley, A. H. Gold, T. S. Hankey, H. G. C. Streatfeild, and P. S. Abraham. Simpson hurt his leg, so Tom played instead of him.

“The Editor of the ‘Sportsman’ told Pape just before the start that we should be very lucky if beaten by less than 15 points. The ground looked very smart with ropes. Things all round it, and there was a big crowd, including a lot of Sandhurst and Wellington lads. We won the toss and played towards the River; Slough road at our backs; the rain fell in torrents. Their three-quarters tried to get going, but our tackling was deadly. After about a quarter of an hour our forwards settled down, and began to rush the Wellington pack all over the field. The ball was like leaden glass, so handling was impossible. Several times the forwards almost had it over, and then just before half-time I hurled myself over the line between the posts in the most dashing style: Loud cheers. Pape missed the kick: Half Time: Eton 3, Wellington 0. Every



one frightfully bucked. Well, straight from the start of the second half, our forwards rushed down on their line, and after a bit of loose play Cayley got a try in the corner. Napier almost converted—6-0. Then Wellington began to press. Their forwards heeled, and Davis, the outside half, got the ball out to Simson, the right centre, who passed to Allom, the right wing, who repassed to Simson, who scored. Quite a good piece of work. The kick failed: 6-3. Then from the 25 kick Scu. headed a grand rush down to their line, where we stayed till the end. Scrum after scrum we got over about four times, and each time the referee—a man Griffiths—who did very well—had them back, as he couldn't see. Then at last, five minutes from the end, Ian Fairbairn hurled himself over. The kick again failed: 9-3. Then 'No side.' The crowd really got excited and cheered like anything. How different to the ghastly apathy at those ridiculous field matches last Half. Old Kindersley almost lost control: he was frightfully bucked. On our side the forwards were wonderful: they kept it up the whole time, only showing faint signs of cracking when they got their try. Ian Fairbairn led them magnificently, and Ian Napier, Scu., and Tom were about the next best, though every one of them was splendid. Algy and I were both very much on the job, and went down to the ball with tremendous courage. The three-quarters had nothing to do. . . . John Frere was, as usual, excellent in all he had to do at back. The mud was unspeakable: all of us, particularly Algy, Ian Fairbairn, Scu., and I were unrecognisable, black from top to toe. Everybody was wild with delight. It really was splendid, though of course on a fine day they would have won, as their backs

were supposed to be really good, esp. the Allom-Simson wing, but of course they never got a chance, as our forwards controlled the game. It will be topping seeing Mum on Thursday. I wish you could come down too. I suppose it is impossible. I got a for a 28 pages on Wallenstein last week, thus keeping up my record of over 50 for every essay this half. Now I must flee to school. Love from

H."

In August 1914, as we all know too well, came the Great War. The immediate result upon Eton was that 150 boys who would have stayed on at once left, some of them only seventeen or even sixteen years of age, for fear that otherwise they "might be too late for the War"! My own House was depleted like other Houses, and included in the number were Arthur Pitman, the Anson twins,<sup>1</sup> and Tom Hunter, who lost his leg in an accident, then joined the Flying Corps, and was the first of our airmen to be killed in Italy.<sup>2</sup> Consequently the younger generation of boys came to the front, and Henry's time of greatness at School, which would normally have come from September 1915 to July '16, came a year earlier.

<sup>1</sup> The Anson twins were indistinguishable to those outside the House, though I who knew them so well hardly realised there was any likeness. Arthur Anson, the younger, was killed by a shell early in the War.

<sup>2</sup> The French and Italian soldiers, who admired Hunter's bravery in joining the Air Force after he lost his leg, gave him a most impressive funeral.

Benjamin Disraeli, in spite of the fact that he was at no Public School himself, has given us in his wonderful picture of Eton in 'Coningsby,' a celebrated passage on a boy's last year at school. "Fame and power," he writes, "are the objects of all men. Even their partial fruition is gained by very few, and that too at the expense of social pleasure, health, conscience, life. Yet what power of manhood in passionate intenseness, appealing at the same time to the subject and the votary, can rival that which is exercised by the idolised chieftain of a great Public School? What fame of after days equals the rapture of celebrity that thrills the youthful poet, as in tones of rare emotion he recites his triumphant verses amid the devoted plaudits of the flower of England? That's fame, that's power: real, unquestioned, undoubted, catholic." Not many boys at any school can have had activities so manifold or powers so great as Henry Dundas in his last year. In the Michaelmas School-time of 1914 he became a member of the VIth Form and Captain of his House; and he was also appointed Editor of the 'Eton College Chronicle.' Before the Half was over he had gained his House Colours at Football, and been elected into Pop; and most important of all, he had obtained a History Exhibition at New College, Oxford. In the Lent School-time of 1915 he became Captain of the Rugby Fifteen, and won the Loder Declamation



Prize, Lord Curzon being the judge and delivering a most interesting address on Oratory. In the summer he became Captain of the Oppidans, won a History Scholarship at Christ Church, Oxford, and was within an ace of getting his Cricket Eleven; and he finished up his career by securing the first Oppidan Prize in an examination for those at the top of the School.

Nor does this list exhaust his activities. Eton is as much riddled by societies as Oxford, and practically every evening Henry was out—on Monday perhaps to the Scientific Society; on Tuesday certainly to the Shakespeare Society; on Wednesday to an Intercession Service, held during the War; on Thursday to the Essay Society; on Friday to a “Pop” debate; and on Saturday perhaps first to a Lecture, and then to a Debate in the House at his own House Debating Society. And had the Eton Political Society been in existence in his day he would certainly have become an active member of that. Moreover, he was a prolific writer. Essays, sometimes of thirty pages, leaders and articles for the ‘Eton College Chronicle,’ squibs and lampoons intended for more private circulation, poured from his pen. He also produced in his last Half an ephemeral known as the ‘Jolly Roger.’ Of this a Master had to be the censor; and article after article and verse after verse that Henry’s fertile brain produced, had to endure,

as reflecting on various authorities, the censorial "blue pencil." Finally, when at last his labours were completed and the paper on the verge of production, the censor produced this apology to Henry :—

A PLEA FROM THE CRIMINAL, IN ARREST OF  
JUDGMENT.

(To the tune of "There's no fool like an old fool.")

Ungentially, I fear, I've baulked your springing  
A mine of mirth to make all Eton split ;  
Incensed, you long to see the Censor swinging,  
Yourself the Acolyte—that were but fit.

Suspend instead—your judgment, till it mellow  
(He once was younger than your ardent self,  
And even now he means no ill, poor fellow) ;  
Suspend it, till you too are on the shelf.

—CATO.

Taking some of Henry's activities in various fields, we may begin by saying something about his work. His various successes, his Exhibition and Scholarship, his Loder and Oppidan Prizes, showed he had not been idle. Moreover, he had the great advantage of being for part of his History and Classics up to Mr C. R. L. Fletcher, the distinguished historian, who had come temporarily to take his son's place as Master.<sup>1</sup> All

<sup>1</sup> The son was in the trenches at Bois Grenier, just behind which he now lies buried. The Germans had captured a French flag, which they boastingly flew from the top of their trenches. Fletcher stole across No Man's Land one night and managed to seize it and to return unscathed. That flag is now in the Ante-Chapel at Eton.



of us, Masters and boys, were the better, not only for Mr Fletcher's teaching, but for association with his personality. And I cannot refrain from quoting two characteristic reports.

" HISTORY REPORT FOR MICHAELMAS SCHOOL-  
TIME, 1914.

" A very able boy, with a fine natural gift for scholarship and with strongly marked taste for Literature. *Nihil tangit quod non ornat.* And seldom can any Master have had a boy whom it was such a pleasure to teach and to know.

" Conduct—Excellent in every respect.

C. R. L. FLETCHER."

" HISTORY REPORT FOR LENT SCHOOL-TIME,  
1915.

" Far the ablest of the specialists, he *can* turn out work that none of them can touch; but he can also be frightfully disappointing. His interest is so varied, and everything comes so easy to him, that he is in danger of coming to grief not between two, but between a dozen stools. I believe he writes the leaders for the 'Chronicle' while he is actually translating Homer right under my nose. His sense of form and style, his literary instinct, are most remarkable, and the gusto with which he flies at a difficult subject is delightful. I did not know that he was also a linguist till I asked him to translate a piece of thirteenth-century Norman-French at sight—he did it almost without a mistake. His lovable character makes it almost impossible to scold him, and yet

I feel that he often wants scolding. Another thing that strikes me favourably is the great sanity of his opinions when you can get him in a serious mood. He thinks everything out for himself, or else the right idea comes to him without reflection.

“Conduct—Excellent; apt to be on tardy book, however.

C. R. L. FLETCHER.”

As Captain of the House, Henry Dundas was very sensible, and he possessed that sanity of judgment to which Mr Fletcher referred. He himself, in the House-Book, to which each successive Captain contributed a commentary with the doings of the House, rejoiced in the fact that the House was not during his period of influence, “standoffish,” as perhaps Eton Houses, my own included, are often inclined to be. “The old grim spirit,” he says, “of keeping to ourselves has entirely died out, and a delightful spirit of broad-mindedness and toleration has taken its place. The House Library is now the rendezvous of all the best elements in Eton. Everybody with any claims to intelligence or pleasantness of conduct is welcome—and both are gainers.”

In the large domains of School life he was, of course, increasingly prominent. He was elected to Pop at Christmas, and in his last summer, as Captain of the Oppidans, was one of the chief officials in the School and in the inner ring of the oligarchy which directed affairs. The Captain of

the School as highest Colleger, the Captain of the Oppidans as the highest Oppidan, are officially the authorities of the School, and with the Captain of the Boats, the Captain of the Eleven, and the President of Pop, are the boys consulted on all matters of importance. The Captain of the Oppidans is also the arbiter in all matters of fagging, and he is traditionally the champion of the rights of VIth Form. He keeps an 'Oppidan Book' in which are recorded the chief events in his turn of office; and I remember how Henry rejoiced in reading the luminous pages which Lord Curzon contributed when he held that position.

In the days of Dundas came the "collar controversy." It seems absurd to quarrel about collars, but, after all, Rome was rent in twain in the first century B.C. about the purple border to the toga, and Prime Ministers of Great Britain have been known to spend sleepless nights over the disposal of a Garter. And, of course, as in Rome with the toga, the collar was merely the symbol of a constitutional struggle. The VIth Form at Eton has various rights—it proceeds in stately procession up Chapel, it provides the speakers in the speeches on 4th June, it on ceremonial occasions represents the School. George III., on one occasion, asked Stratford Canning, known later to fame as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, when he was still a boy at Eton,

what part of the School he was in. "The VIth Form, sir," answered Canning. "A much greater man," replied the King, "than I can ever make you." But that incident happened more than 100 years ago, and membership of VIth Form does not count for so much as it did. The body which does carry the greater weight is "Pop," or the Eton Society. This is a society which was founded in 1811 for purposes of debate, and Mr Gladstone and other famous persons were members of it; and a short time ago it celebrated its centenary, with Lord Rosebery in the chair. Nowadays, however, its debating has somewhat sunk into the background, and it is a society representing the dominant personalities in the School. It has certain official elements, but most of the members are co-opted by the boys themselves. Of course, as in every school, the athletic element is well represented; but it by no means follows that because a boy is in the Eleven or the Eight he should be elected to Pop. Indeed, at times the "intellectuals" have been the predominant element.

Both VIth Form and the Eton Society have certain distinguishing marks of dress, VIth Form in collars, and Pop in collars and other articles of attire. When Henry was Captain of the Oppidans a Colleger in VIth Form suddenly startled the Eton world, or rather the upper portion of it, by wearing a collar which hitherto



Pop had only worn. At once the hot-heads in Pop were up in arms; behind the collar, it was thought, lurked the design to revive the glories of VIth Form at the expense of Pop. Henry, as at once a member of Pop and the Captain of the Oppidans, might have been justified in a seat on the fence; but he at once plunged into the fray on the side of VIth Form. Feeling at one time ran strong. The matter was eventually unofficially referred to a Master who was a former President of Pop; and I remember his telling me how Henry had at once got to the heart of the controversy, and proved with inexorable logic that a self-appointed and unofficial, and in the annals of Eton, an almost mushroom body like Pop, could have no rights against an authorised body like VIth Form, who were officially, though not perhaps actually, the chief authorities of the School. The more extreme members of Pop were convinced, and VIth Form wore what collars they liked.

No doubt the controversy appears a very childish one during the Great War; but it was not more childish, and certainly less reprehensible, than the various squabbles at the same time between Government Departments; and nothing seems more absurd to outsiders and of greater importance to those engaged in it than a controversy on some constitutional symbol of power! But I have related the story rather because it illustrates

Henry's courage in upholding a cause which was not the popular one, his judgment in at once realising the strength of the position of VIth Form, and his successful insistence upon it in discussion and debate.

I have said at the beginning of this chapter that Henry was not over-popular with his contemporaries during the earlier part of his career. What was his position in the School at the end ? Henry had gradually during his career at Eton been shedding his exuberances, though the hypercritical might still perhaps have liked to use a pruning-knife. But his many excellent qualities, his good temper, his courage, his real kindness of heart, had won recognition ; and the variety of his gifts and attainments, his ready wit, his wide reading, his powers of imitation and storytelling, made him the most amusing and interesting of companions. At the end of his time at Eton he was certainly one of the outstanding personalities of the School. Mr Alan Lubbock, one of Henry's closest friends, has kindly sent an appreciation which gives the point of view of a contemporary, and describes admirably his activities and the impression he made.

“ During his last year or two at Eton, Henry's position was most remarkable. Perhaps what struck his contemporaries most was the enormous number of boys in the School whom he knew : for he knew practically every one, even the most

unlikely ; and those whom he did not know personally he usually knew by sight. Here again the power of his memory and his eagerness for the acquisition of knowledge showed themselves. If he saw a boy about whom he knew nothing, he at once took steps to find out ; and many a time, when I have asked Henry about some obscure-looking Lower Boy whom he had just greeted by his Christian name, he has given me a complete history of his life, including private school and position in his family—and this when there was no special reason at all why he should take any interest in him. But none of his relations depended simply on his qualities of good companionship. It would be a mistake to suppose that his enormous acquaintance was the result of mere curiosity, or of a desire to be on easy neutral terms in all circles. His unceasing energies worked in his social talents, as well as in everything else, so that all who knew him felt that an active force, stimulating, disturbing, as well as delighting, was being brought to bear upon them. To make life as full as possible, to push it into closest contact with every point of his surroundings, was his continual object, in pursuit of which institutions were explored to the limit of their possibilities, and from personalities a definite response of some kind was necessarily evoked.

“This response was, as often as not, in some form of opposition, and a considerable measure of unpopularity would undoubtedly have resulted, had it not been for Henry’s obvious affection for every one. He attacked right and left, but never with malice : the “heavies,” as he called the more exclusively athletic section of the school, particularly in Pop, were continually being satirised, but always to their faces, and in a way so



full of humour and good nature that ill-feeling never entered, to prevent his victims taking equal delight with every one else in the fresh view which his imagination gave them of themselves and of all about them. When there were any differences or antagonisms which sprang from personal causes, jealousy or the like, I never remember that Henry took any side—kindly ridicule was poured on both, and ill-feeling generally melted in laughter; but whenever there was a controversy on a matter of principle, he declared himself at once as on one side, and employed reason, wit, and all to their fullest, not only to prevail over the other side, but to convince them.

“His remarkable powers of entertainment helped to make up his position in the School, and especially in Pop, where not only could he hold a large audience spellbound while he recited the lurid biography in verse (composed perhaps during the last school) of some eminently worthy master, but also, what was more difficult, he could stimulate others to flights of fancy rivalling his own, being ‘not only witty in himself, but the cause that wit was in other men.’

“Logic always supported, if it did not guide, the tremendous overflow of his energies, sometimes to the embarrassment of his friends, who were often compelled, if only in self-defence, to try to curb some of his activities. During his last two Halves he was Oppidan editor of the ‘Chronicle,’ in which he saw a rather dull official paper, needing to be revived with a little sensational journalism. This he gave it (especially in reports of Rugger matches, where he loved to employ the methods of the cheap sporting Press), and his efforts were a continual source of alarm to the more timid



College editor, whose counsels of moderation Henry generally dismissed with his convincing logic ; though if he saw that any friend would really be happier for his abandoning some project, he would always do so with perfect good humour, and look for some other field for his enterprise.

“ In his relations with his closest friends, loyalty and sympathy were unfailing, and in spite of all his own varied powers, he had a real and deep admiration, which was always fully expressed, for anything that was at all good in what they did. In his generous appreciation of other people’s qualities or powers, he never thought of comparing them with his own ; just as in his vigorous exercise of his own talents, he never had time to stop and admire them. So complete was this part of Henry’s life, and so concentrated had he always been on making the best use of the present time, that no one, I think, who genuinely loved Eton ever left with fewer regrets—even though that was at a time when leaving meant much more than it does in times of peace, for we were acutely conscious of what was coming.

“ To indicate fully other Eton figures, often only one image is needed, as when a boy found expression entirely or mainly in one line, whether that was in rowing, in cricket, in disciplining his house, or in anything ; but with Henry, by reason of his identification of himself with Eton life in every aspect that offered, this is impossible : each image, each phrase means so little, except in the light of a hundred others, and it is impossible to convey briefly to those who did not know him any idea of the variety of the delight and inspiration which his memory brings to those who were privileged to be his friends.”

For Henry I looked forward to the possession of an All Souls' Fellowship at Oxford, and to a brilliant career in the future. For it was in politics that he would probably have found his real vocation. He would have revelled in the elections, public meetings, the changes in the fortunes of the "Blues" and "Greens" in our political arena—if such continue—and in all the things which, whatever the critics may say, make political life undeniably attractive to those who take part in it. But Henry Dundas had also the capacity for detail, the insight and the sympathy and, above all, the courage which would have made him a statesman and not a mere politician; and there is no height to which he might not have risen. The Great War, however, claimed him, as it did all others of his age at the very threshold of their careers; and the boy who left Eton in July 1915 after his last year of delights, was within a year to see the most blood-stained highway in the world at Hooge, and to witness death in its most horrible forms on the Somme. At twenty he was to command a Company, with the lives of some 200 men dependent upon his judgment and his example; and soon after he was twenty-one his life with all its brilliant promise was to close.

In Mr Fletcher's reports there is a reference to Henry's various and conflicting activities. But the wonder to me is that boys during the

War worked as well and behaved as well as they did. "The Angel of Death," said John Bright in a famous speech during the Crimean War, "has been abroad throughout the land; we may almost hear the beating of his wings." But if the Crimean War claimed its thousands, the Great War claimed its hundreds of thousands. Death was very close to us at Eton during those four years. One day a boy would lose his father; the next another would mourn a brother. Week by week were read in the Chapel the names of those Old Etonians who had just fallen; week by week the lists of the dead outside the Chapel grew longer. And when the boys reached an age when they could kill and be killed, they went forth to meet gas and liquid fire, the bullet and the shell, the grenade and the mine. Over all hovered the Angel of Death; the fortunate might hope for wounds or imprisonment, for gas or shell-shock, but to one in four the Angel would give the summons. Some of us older people thought, and thought wrongly, that youth cared only for the moment, and had no thought for the morrow; all the more honour to those boys at Eton and elsewhere who faced that morrow and all its horrors unflinchingly, and so far as their elders were concerned, silently. They worked and played at school, and talked and behaved just as if the future had no troubles; but they knew what awaited them and said nothing.

Henry's continual reference to his life at Eton in his letters from the front show how strong a hold it had secured upon him and how affectionate was his memory of it. I remember a Master of a renowned Oxford College saying to me that with boys from other schools their loyalty and affection to their University or College might come first, but with Etonians never—Eton is always first with them. And those of us, either old or young, who are in any way responsible for Eton welfare, will feel that the highest tribute we can pay to those who are gone is to endeavour to preserve the best traditions of the School, and to do our utmost to make the name of Eton as much cherished by future generations of Etonians as it was by those generations who fought and died in the Great War.



## CHAPTER III.

## FRANCE.

MAY 1916 TO DECEMBER 1916.

## I. THE YPRES SALIENT.

WHATEVER walk in life Henry might have chosen had he survived the War, it is of course principally as a soldier that he showed his capacity as a man of action; and in the history of his famous Regiment, when its Chronicle of the War comes to be written, his name will doubtless find due place and recognition. If this book is to have any general interest, therefore, beyond the circle of those who will read it for what they knew their friend to be, it will lie principally in the letters which follow, and which in themselves constitute a sketch of the doings of the Guards Division from the spring of 1916 until within six weeks of the end of the War. They may also have interest as a description of the life which was led at the front by a young Public Schoolboy officer with no military training or predilections, but who through force

of character and love of his men evinced from the first qualities of leadership.

The letters were almost without exception written to his mother and me, and they are of course intensely personal and constantly critical in tone. But in regard to this his views were doubtless for the most part only those of the majority of his brother officers, and, as he said himself, some of his outbursts may be attributed to the need for "safety-valving."

It must also be constantly kept in mind that they cover a period during which the writer would normally have been spending his last year at school, or enjoying the irresponsibility of his first few terms at Oxford.

A year and three-quarters later (February 1918), when, in Henry's words, "the extreme quiet of our present sector necessitates some activity to prevent death from boredom," he began to write a Chronicle of his time in France, and he concluded a short Foreword by the remark that it would be interesting to see how long he should be able to keep it going.

In point of fact, the Chronicle, which was to be written for his own eyes and for one or two of the most intimate of his friends, extends only to a few pages, but it enables me to record in his own characteristic words—words which testify to his wonderful power of looking facts in the face—the events which led up to his leaving for

France and joining the First Battalion of his Regiment in the Salient.

“I joined,” he writes, “the Scots Guards at Wellington Barracks on 4th September 1915. I was 19—*i.e.*, of an age to come out—on 5th February 1916, and shortly after that date Eric Mackenzie, then Adjutant at Wellington, asked me if I would like to go out then, or ‘wait for the warm weather,’ as he put it. I was enjoying myself not a little in London at the time, and as I have never suffered from any delusions on the subject of the duration of the War, I hedged and said I would do exactly as ordered, but didn’t want to decide myself. So Eric left it at that. Though never actually appalled at the prospect of active service, I was, I must confess, rather less enthusiastic about it than I ought to have been—*i.e.*, nowadays I should expect a different attitude in my company officers, and should probably get it. So when just before Easter I was detailed for the Training Company at Corsham, I realised ‘that the end was near.’ Indeed, there was little buoyancy in my inmost heart when I realised that I was ‘for it.’ Corsham I pass by—I could write a book about that alone—and get on to the day of my departure—Friday, the 26th (I think) of May. I was going out with the people who had been with me at Corsham—Leslie Childers, Gold, and A. R. W. Menzies. As we were going alone, our servants had to follow by the next draft, which always seems to me to be rather a futile arrangement. We left Waterloo by the 2 P.M. train, and duly arrived at Southampton and got on board our ship. An absolutely perfect day, and one strongly conducive to the semi-sentimental, semi-apprehen-

sive reflections likely to be engendered by the occasion.

"I had been very fairly sane in the buying of kit, though about as little prepared as the ordinary neophyte for the conditions 'at the War.' 'Dumps' Coke's advice—'Take a couple of very cheap shirts, wear them for a few weeks, and then get more sent out to save washing'—I found to be applicable to 1914 rather than the date of my apprenticeship. I had made up my mind to act on the safe plan of waiting to judge what I really wanted from actual experience, and in the meanwhile stealing or borrowing anything necessary.

"We had a perfect crossing, but a long one—reaching Havre at 7 in the morning. I knew all my companions very well by now after one month at Corsham.

"As always with officers joining the Scots Guards in France for the first time, we knew almost *nil* about the two Battalions or the Guards Division, or anything else that we ought to have been instructed in. I *did* know who commanded the Division, and who commanded our two Battalions; but as to what Battalions the Division was composed of, who commanded the Brigades, &c., the whole thing was a sealed book to me and to us all—and still is to all young officers coming out.

"The question which interested us chiefly was, which Battalion should we go to? Such considerations as, which was the best C.O. didn't affect us, as we didn't know in the least what qualities were necessary for a good Battalion Commander or the reverse. I wanted to go to the 1st Battalion, for the reason that Eric Mackenzie was just going out to it as Adjutant, and though not yet on intimate terms with him,



I had already marked him A<sup>+</sup>. After the various reportings to A.M.Q.O.'s and other pompous, self-important jacks-in-office—nearly all of whom seem to take a real joy in making people uncomfortable—people going on leave will bear witness to the truth of this—we received our orders, which were to report to the Base forthwith. Our kit was sent up, and it was not without trepidation that I saw the last of mine as it was flung upon a lorry. 'There's nae pairtin's,' &c. The Base is at Harfleur, about five miles from the centre of Havre, and connected by rather moderate trams with the latter. We scorned the trams, and went up in an ambulance—a prophetic journey in view of the countless 'long-jumps' to come on almost every road in France and Flanders. Even at that stage I realised the fundamental principles of 'lift-cadging,' which are—

- (a) To stand in the very middle of the road, so that the car has to run over you or stop.
- (b) To salute incessantly till safely seated.
- (c) Never to say, 'Are you going to A?' but rather, 'Can you help me on a bit?' or something non-committal, and then stop the thing when it suits you."

After describing the Base and its officers, he proceeds :—

"It was during our first few hours at the Base that a feeling of unrest began to grow—a longing to get to the seat of the War, now that one had got through the preliminaries of leaving England and taking the first real plunge. So I was extremely

anxious to get up to my Battalion—whichever it might be—as soon as possible. ‘Now that one is out here, one might as well go the whole hog’ sort of feeling, so it was with the greatest interest that we waited to see to which Battalions we should be posted. It soon came out—the next morning, in fact—and panned out very well,—Menzies, Gold, and Percy Wallace—whom we found at the Base—posted to the 2nd Battalion—and Leslie and I to the 1st Battalion. The usual method of procedure for officers coming out was for them to spend a short time—in some cases quite a long time—at the Base, then go up to the Entrenching Battalion, and then to their units. In our case the first step was soon got over. We got orders to go to the Entrenching Battalion the same day that we were posted, and the next evening we left the Base, Leslie, Menzies, Wallace, and I, leaving Gold fuming behind. But he was destined to do us down.

“Several other people went ‘up the line’ with us—including a nice man called Cosmo Gordon in the Grenadiers, who had been a librarian and was newly married. I had got a temporary servant till Witt should come out, a stout fellow, but better in a mine-shaft than a tent, I should say.

“We left Havre at 2 in the morning and arrived at Rouen—normally a two-hours’ run in a fast train—at 9 or thereabouts. This was good going compared to some ‘trains I have known.’ At Rouen we had several hours, and went into the town to wash, lunch, &c., all of which we did very excellently at the Hôtel de la Poste, and then Gordon and I wandered round the town, an exploit I was to repeat in November with one of my greatest friends—now gone like most

of the others—Eric Greer. We got into the train again at 3 in the afternoon, and after a tremendous journey round by Abbeville, reached Amiens the *next* afternoon, and so to Mericourt-Ribemont, the then railhead. There we left the train, and our kits were heaped on limbers, and we ‘footed it’ to the Entrenching Battalion about 5 miles away, in a wood called the Bois des Tailles about 3 miles west of Bray.”

He describes the Entrenching Battalion in a passage which is evidently one of those specially intended for his own eyes, and he arrives at the conclusion that the *raison d'être* of the place is to make every one keen to join their own Battalions.

Here he stayed for three weeks. The only episode during the period worthy of mention was the 4th Army's Fourth of June dinner at the Godbert in Amiens. One hundred and eighty were present. The Chairman made a “typical General's speech: ‘When I was at Eton I am afraid the only work I did was in shirking my Latin Proses, . . . &c.’ (Cries of ‘Oh! Sir!’ and hearty guffaws.) Poor chaps, most of them died during the next three months. I sat opposite —— and ——. They both shrieked with laughter at everything I said, so I enjoyed myself.”

“About the 20th of June the 1st Battalion was engaged at Hooze—taking over the line from the Canadians, who had had the hell of a time in Sanctuary Wood.<sup>1</sup> Schiff was killed, and Mann

<sup>1</sup> See Sir Philip Gibbs' ‘Realities of War,’ pp. 229-232.



and Brand both wounded, so the summons was sent out and Leslie and I were 'for it' in earnest. How pleased I was! Just to make the picture complete we left the Entrenching Battalion at 4 A.M., but what matter? The usual day's journey supervened. Once again we stopped most of the night at Abbeville—whenever I hear an engine whistle at night now I think of Abbeville—and I remember dining with one Chapman bound for the 2nd Battalion, and killed on the 25th September—very gallant.

“From Abbeville we took wing about 3 A.M., and morning saw me cleaning my teeth at Calais—and then the old familiar round, though so new and enthralling then—Watten, St Omer, and Hazebrouck—where we lunched. Witt had joined me at the Entrenching Battalion, and now informed me that he had seen Esme Gordon-Lennox's servant at Hazebrouck, who said that the latter had got a Brigade, and that Norman Orr-Ewing was even now on his way out to command the Battalion. Only the first part of his story was true.

“About 4 we 'hit the trail' again—this time in a train drawn by one of those rawching great R.O.D. tank-engines, with brazen domes. An hour in the train, and then Poperinghe and the last lap. An unusually civil R.T.O. directed us to our Battalion—which, so he said, had just come out—and quite right he was. Servants were left at the station, and Leslie and I started off along what is now probably the most famous road in the world—the Vlamertinghe road. After asking the way about a dozen times—more from nervousness than anything else—we at last took the proper turn off to the left, and there, in Ack Thirty Forest, we found our



camp — better forgotten — and the end of our Odyssey.”

Major Miles Barne was temporarily commanding the Battalion, and Henry describes their introduction to him at the hands of Captain Cecil Trafford, the Transport Officer :—

“ Other introductions followed. Hugh Ross, commanding R.F., with Dudley Shortt, Champion, and Bobby Abercromby, were all well known to me, as was Guy Leach, whom I had taught to bomb at Southfields, and now found as Bombing Officer of the Battalion. Martindale, too, of L.F. I knew, also its commander, old Lionel Norman, and Ronny Powell of ‘ C ’ Company. Calverley Bewicke, commanding ‘ C ’ Company during the absence on leave of ‘ Luss ’ Colquhoun,<sup>1</sup> its proper commander, I knew slightly. There only remained ‘ B ’ Company, where I found Miller under the command of Tim Orr-Ewing, brother of Norman. Leslie was posted to L.F., and I found myself in ‘ B,’ but doing duty temporarily with ‘ C,’ the other officer of which was Malcolm Menzies. And now a few words as to the military situation as it affected the Battalion. The 1/S.G. had just come out of Hooze, whither they had been pulled up from Bollezeele to relieve the Canadians (see above). This had been accomplished without serious disaster by the 2nd Guards Brigade (3/G.G., 1/C.G., 1/S.G., and 2/I.G.), who were now out for 8 days, at the end of which period they were to relieve the 1st Guards Brigade, who were holding the extreme left sector of the

<sup>1</sup> Captain Sir Iain Colquhoun, D.S.O., of Luss. He subsequently left to command a battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, and afterwards the 13th Royal Scots.

British line in France, with the 3rd Guards Brigade on the right. At the end of 8 days the 2nd Brigade would go into the line for 16 days, the 1st Brigade come out for 8 and relieve the 3rd Brigade, who in their turn would come out for 8 and then relieve us, and so on. The Ypres salient had long been known as the worst part of the British front; and as the Division had been in there since early in March—losing from 3000–4000 a month in casualties, sick, &c.—they were getting rather tired of it. We had never been in the actual sector into which we were going before, and so I started all square as regards going into a new line.

“The whole Division had just come back from practising for an attack on the Pilkem Ridge—which fronted the position—billed to take place about August 14; but the tremendous cost and comparative ill-success of the early stages of the Somme relegated all other enterprises to the background—except perhaps the notorious ‘extensive raiding operations, in which we captured 150 prisoners E. of Armentières,’ which was the charmingly ingenuous ‘official’ account of a properly organised attack by three Divisions of the newly-formed II. Anzac Corps, which ended in a complete fiasco, and cost us from 3000 to 4000 casualties.

“Going into the line for the first time is rather thrilling—and, I think, essentially *the* new sensation produced by the War.—For a long time I had been imagining what the line would be like, and viewing the picture ‘with interest and concern,’ to quote a famous phrase of Alan’s. During the time we were out we had a most pleasant time. The weather was perfect and the camp good, and there was a good deal of cricket

and football—the latter played by the private soldier, especially the Scot, the whole year round, irrespective of the weather. Of Militarism there was none—for the theory of doing nothing when out of the line was then in force. Of course I was far too incompetent and ignorant myself at the time to appreciate the situation. Indeed I had got into the absurd habit of rather looking down on smartness as being ‘Grenadier’ and offensive. At this time, however—June 1916—as far as general efficiency went, the 3rd Battalion Grenadiers were, as now, as good, if not better, than any Battalion in the Division. This was due almost entirely to two men, and especially to the first—B. N. Sergison Brooke, their Commanding Officer, and Oliver Lyttelton, their Adjutant. ‘Boy’ Brooke had had a wonderful career in the War. At the Staff College when it broke out, he was soon appointed Staff Captain to the 20th Brigade (7th Division), with whom he served up to January or February 1915, when he went as Brigade Major to the 1st (Guards) Brigade in the 1st Division. On the formation of the Guards Division he became Brigade Major to the 2nd Guards Brigade, and got the 3rd Bn. Grenadiers in February 1916 after 6 weeks as G.S.O. II. to the Vth Corps. He combined all the successful qualities of a good Staff Officer and regimental officer. But he was not the most remarkable figure in the Brigade—this place must be reserved for the Brigadier, John Ponsonby.

“John Ponsonby had come out in command of the 1/C.G., for which Battalion he always showed a marked preference, and, with the exception of a brief spell at home in October and November 1914, commanded them up to the formation of the Division in July 1915, when he was given



the 2nd Guards Brigade. He was about 50 years of age, and his health had not been improved by long service in Uganda and elsewhere; and therefore such an arduous command as a Brigade must have been a tax upon him physically. But his amazing personality and charm made up for these disabilities. His powers as an entertainer were very great. The finest raconteur in the world, he could make the most ordinary incident into a perfectly screaming story, and more than any one founded that 2nd Guards Brigade spirit which is so characteristic of the Brigade. He was a very good judge of character, and there was never a 'dud' anywhere near his Headquarters. When he became (in August 1917) a Divisional Commander, he was an enormous success, for with the higher formation his personality was able to influence even more people.

"His Brigade Major at the time of my going was Guy Rasch—a charming fellow and good 'O' officer. He went back to the 3/G.G. as 2nd in command almost immediately, and his place was taken by E. W. M. Grigg (G.G.) The latter's career was as remarkable as any of the great ones of the War. Editor of the 'Round Table' and a brilliant journalist of the best type, he joined the Grenadiers in January 1915."

There the 'Chronicle' ends abruptly. It would have been a valuable narrative had he continued it, and, as he says elsewhere, a sketch "treating of events that have occurred in the past is apt to be more valuable or less dreary than a diary, which is too often a mere statement of fact without any conclusions or deductions."



For a month after he joined the Battalion the Division remained in the Salient, and "a week in the Salient is equal to six in any other part of the line." Letters between his mother and him passed with absolute regularity—as they did during the whole of his foreign service,—and during the first thirty days with his Battalion I find twenty-nine letters from him. As he said at the end of one, "Nothing more, but I always think an envelope daily is worth much more than what people call 'a nice long letter' once a week," and, "This day-to-day correspondence is a thing that makes the War much more bearable."

By the beginning of July he was installed in his own Company, and his affection for his Company Commander grew more and more intense during the short period of their comradeship.

"B.E.F., 1st July.

"On the Canal Bank. Heavily shelled. Now in my own proper Company, 'B.' Tim Orr-Ewing, C.C., Miller and self subalterns. Miller a remarkable fellow. Before the War he was in Karachi. On leave when war broke out. Enlisted in the ranks, and was out here for about a year as a private, corporal, and sergeant. He then broke a record by getting a commission in the regiment. It has never been done before in the Guards for a man to get a commission from the ranks. A very stout man, and very competent.

"The shelling isn't much fun. You're abso-

lutely helpless, as to go into a dug-out is merely to exchange burial alive for disintegration: and burial alive, 'It's such a stuffy death,' as Yum Yum said on a celebrated occasion."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Sunday, 2nd July.*

"Another day of rest in every sense. The guns—which were well on the job all last night—have ceased momentarily, and there is peace. Some din last night—a field-gun battery just behind us spitting out its 25 shells a minute, then the whine of the heavy howitzer shells going over from behind, and of course every now and then a heavy dunch as of J. Braid playing a push shot into the wind at the 18th at Walton Heath, and the dug-out quivers. German retaliation: as a matter of fact there wasn't very much. I suppose they've got some hell up their sleeves. We have raids almost nightly—50 men and a couple of officers. Artillery preparation for about an hour on a fairly wide front so as to keep the Germans in the dark as to where the actual entry is going to be made into the trenches, then they ring off for 5 minutes; the raiders rush across, and the Artillery lengthens the range a bit and forms a barrage behind the sector which is being raided. The raiders are generally over for about half an hour, and at a given signal are supposed to leap out of the trench and return with as much plunder, human and otherwise, as they can get. That is the programme, which of course is subject to alterations according to the preparedness of the German. If the latter has been properly ragged by the bombardment they generally get back intact. If not—that is, if he remains—is

ready—well, you see all about successful raids in the papers, but the other night a raiding party from the — went over and not one of them came back.

“I do hope N. Orr-Ewing is coming to us. His brother seemed to know nothing. The latter is, I think, excellent: sees things exactly as they are, tremendously pro-Northcliffe, foams at the ludicrous optimism of people at home over nothing at all. How right—why be anything till there is a reason? Quite good news to-day from the South, but it’ll be a fortnight’s show, and there was too much of the ‘we took the western edge . . . we are holding the northern boundary of this village,’ &c. sort of thing in the official thing yesterday. However, let’s hope it will be all right.

“But what a country—or rather what a Government! The Foreign Office exchanging 375 Germans for 22 English. They must be in German pay. Quite grim. However, I suppose something will happen soon, though I must confess that I am not in the least imbued with ‘that cheery optimism which characterises our lads in the trenches,’ nor have I seen much of it out here. No one is in the least gloomy, but most are quite unable to see any signs of the end. Still it’s got to come some time.”

The new experiences of such a life evoked of course a certain amount of moralising.

“Curiously enough—or perhaps naturally—as we have had a very easy time,” he writes on 12th July, “my feelings have not been those of fear. But, after all, a certain degree of personal courage is a *sine qua non*, or rather a power of concealing

terror, and that every one possesses. The merit lies in how much fear there is to conceal. So far I have been fortunate in escaping its paralysing influence. But wait till you get a bad bombardment ('said I to myself, said I'). Then we shall see.

"Of course the longer one stays out here the worse one's nerves become. For instance, shells and bullets affect me far less than shall we say M., though the latter has been out here eighteen months. Odd. I shall probably be a wreck in one."

But when the Battalion were resting or behind the line he could appreciate to the full the semi-peacefulness of the scene, and give his imagination full rein. Thus on 4th July he wrote:—

"But, mon Dieu, the sun is shining to-day from a perfect Eton sky—both from actual colour and association, and any water—even a Canal—reminds me of the river, and any trees—even shell-torn—of Upper Club, and Christopher Barclay popping in from the Coldstream is thoroughly imbued with the right spirit."

Or—

"What an evening to-night. Lovely. I lay in a clover field behind the Canal bank and read Matthew Arnold. I like him immensely, a liking which was started by Hugh Macnaghten in B 1. How long ago it seems, and how pleasant it was."

And a few days afterwards:—

"Matthew Arnold still occupies me. Read 'Balder Dead,' very great. And of course Robbie



Burns is never far away, accompanied by W. S. Gilbert."

"Another perfect evening. I strolled out behind the Canal, where, aided by a walking-stick and a huge imagination, I played a match over North Berwick with old Alick. We halved. I did a 75; he a 76. All square and 1 to go. 3's at the last hole. What a joy imagination is."

"Beautiful weather for the last two days. Sunsets marvellous. Christopher Barclay is a great joy. We go for long walks, and talk of the golden days which shall never return."

But besides these reflective interludes there was hard exercise at cricket and football with the men. He describes a cricket match played on matting in the dusty square of Poperinghe (not named at the time) in which he got out in a foolish way, and his comment is, "It is strange how irritating these little things are. But I think I should foam if some one gave me out l.b.w., even though we were doing an attack the next day."

In the middle of July he writes of—

"A most strenuous Company football match against 'C,' which we won 4-2. I found myself playing left half in front of Sam Allan, ex-Hibs. : it stirred the heart to hear the familiar voices at the ring side, 'Come awa', Easter Road,' 'Poosh 'em, Wullie,' &c. It is a pity that with such magnificently Scotch men the officers should mostly be English to a degree. The Scottish

element among the officers is confined to I. Colquhoun, Hugh Ross, Tim Orr-Ewing, self, and Bobby Abercromby, *et voilà tout.*”

But now fresh tasks were awaiting the Division on the Somme, and a few days after a great entertainment at Brigade Headquarters, described in the following letter, the Battalion left the Yser Canal.

“1ST SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
22nd July.

“Two immense and excellent letters to-day, for which many thanks.

“Last night we had a great stunt at Brigade Headquarters. The band was playing, so the Brigadier sent round an invitation to anybody to roll up, which we did. They cleared out the room, and we danced till about midnight. We had a great foursome—‘Sloper’ Mackenzie, Eric’s brother in the Grenadiers, Luss Colquhoun, Wolrige Gordon, and self—Hugh Ross supplying the melody on the pipes—a crowd of admiring Sassenachs standing round. Great. Hech! What a lot of O.E.’s. Extraordinary. When they played the ‘Boating Song,’ C. Barclay and I nearly wept. There was something very great in the whole thing—the guns going like hell up in front; flares stabbing the night all around; and yet the officers of 4 Guards Battalions could forget everything—even the possible imminence of a super-Somme show, and revel as at a children’s party. Could the Germans do it? I should like to see them. . . . Magnificent I thought the whole thing.

“To-day will be entirely uneventful; it drizzled this morning, which was an excellent

excuse for not having the proposed route-march, much to everybody's joy. It rather looks from the news as if the southern offensive had been bearing up—I wonder.

“Here you will find, for information, as they say in official circles, the Guards Division—its formation. You will find things easier to follow then : *voilà* :—

GUARDS DIVISION : Major-General FEILDING (C.G.)

1ST BRIGADE.

(The Old 4th Brigade.)

Brigadier-General C. E. PEREIRA, Commanding  
Officer (C.G.)

2nd Grenadiers	.	.	.	de Crespigny.
2nd Coldstream	.	.	.	Follett.
3rd Coldstream	.	.	.	Campbell.
1st Irish	.	.	.	Macalmont.

2ND BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General J. PONSONBY (C.G.)

3rd Grenadiers	.	.	.	Brooke.
1st Coldstream	.	.	.	Baring.
1st Scots	.	.	.	?
2nd Irish	.	.	.	Read.

3RD BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General CORKRAN (G.G.)

1st Grenadiers	.	.	.	Maitland.
4th Grenadiers	.	.	.	Seymour.
2nd Scots	.	.	.	Tempest.
1st Welsh	.	.	.	Murray Threipland.
4th Coldstream (Pioneers)	.	.	.	Skeffington Smyth.

“Before the Division was formed the 1st Coldstream and the 1st Scots were in the 1st Brigade with the 1st Black Watch and the 1st Camerons; the 2nd Scots and the 1st Grenadiers in the 20th Brigade with the 2nd Gordons and the 1st Border Regiment. The others are new Battalions.”

## II. THE SOMME.<sup>1</sup>

For the next month it is a constant tale of moving south. “On the Road. Five miles’ march from the village. Then train for four hours followed by a ten miles’ march” is a typical description of the day’s work, and the tedium is relieved by episodes such as these: “Gilbert and Sullivan won me a franc this morning. A bet as to whether Captain Corcoran says, ‘I am in reasonable health’ or ‘in tolerable health.’ ‘Reasonable,’ of course.”

“This afternoon I have been talking Eton shop solidly with Christopher Barclay for about two and a half hours. And we are continuing after tea. What a heritage.”

<sup>1</sup> “Nothing has ever been done by Battalions of the Guards finer than the part they took in the battle of the Somme. It was not until the beginning of September that the Guards Division arrived in the Somme area, so it was not present at the first two phases of the battle. But in the attacks of September 15 and 25 the men covered themselves with glory: their discipline and coolness under fire were magnificent, and they captured lines which had up to then been considered impregnable. The final assault of Lesbœufs was one of the most successful operations of the war.”—Sir Frederick Ponsonby’s ‘History of the Grenadier Guards.’



Just a month after the Division left the Salient he writes as follows :—

“ We are now in a village about one mile from where I started my active-service career with the old diggers, having taken six hours in train to do twenty-five miles. To give added piquancy to the situation, we were in a so-called tactical train, described in military handbooks as being used for rushing troops from one part of the country to another. We passed through Australians on our way to the station. Magnificent men. All asking if we were going to rest : so that gives us the cue of what the situation is down here. We have been expected ever since the biff started, and the atmosphere is rather like that in a Music Hall when the Star turn is just coming on. Some turn, I should imagine.”

On the 4th of September, when the 2nd Guards' Brigade were training at Morlancourt, he was appointed Battalion Bombing Officer on the death of Guy Leach, and a few days after, the Brigade having moved to the Happy Valley and afterwards to Carnoy, he found himself in hospital at the Corps Rest Station at Corbie with some internal trouble which involved a diet of milk and brandy. The hospital was “ a most imposing chateau place, which reminded me poignantly of the Savoy. In the middle of a very noisy, dusty, dirty town, with a main street running alongside of the building, along which great convoys of lorries go night and day.”

"I finished 'Guy Mannering' this morning, but I cannot help thinking that a child of five would have remembered scenes witnessed at that age quite distinctly, and that the sight of Ellan-gowan would hardly have failed to bring the whole thing back with a flash. And then how marvellously inadequate is Scott's treatment of women. Lucy and Julia are simply lay figures, or at least very minor parts. . . . With the capture of Ginchy they seem to have got to the top of the ridge. What will be the next chapter?"

Henry left the hospital to join his Battalion on the 13th September, and thus just missed taking part in the memorable attack which the 2nd Brigade delivered on the 15th. It will be remembered that the Somme offensive had by this time been in operation for six weeks, and had resulted in the capture of many places south and west of the Pozières Ridge. On this day tanks were used for the first time, and the attack resulted in the taking of High Wood, Flers, Martinpuich, and Courcelettes, though the whole scheme, which involved the capture of Lesbœufs and Morval, was not immediately successful, certain troops being held up by uncut wire.

"1st BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
14th September.

"Well, here I am at the Transport. I came back from Corbie yesterday in an A.S.C. car as there was nothing else to take me up, otherwise I couldn't have got up till to-day. Arrived here to find the 'left behind for the biff' party. (*En*

*passant*, any one who said that the Guards weren't going to do anything will be chagrined to hear that the 3rd Brigade have already had 24 officer casualties—*i.e.*, 1st G.G. 8, 4th G.G. 4, Welsh 10, 2nd S.G. 2 (rather serious), and they were only holding a bit of Ginchy, and are in reserve to the 1st and 2nd Brigades, who take part in THE biff of the Western front which begins on Z day.) The Welsh did magnificently, I believe. 'Even the ranks of Tuscany,' &c., but poor Alex. Wernher<sup>1</sup> and Edward Cazalet were among the killed—both awfully sad. Well, the Battalion—mine—is up behind the line waiting to go in. The party here consisted of Barne (2nd i/c), Elwes, Shortt, Abercromby, and Tim. They were counting me as sick, but Godman, on hearing I was back, said I was to remain here till called for, which you will be glad to hear. Tim has just gone up (midday), as Trafford, transport officer, brought back news this morning that Holland had been killed. Sickening being slain in preparatory—and on the whole desultory—shelling. Poor Ned. Almost forty, and a gallant man, if ever there was one. Jack Stirling has been left out by the 2nd Battalion, who are just going up, and he is coming to lunch with us. (You must understand that every Battalion before a show leaves out a certain number of officers.) Thanks so much for sending the food. It will be enormously welcome.

"Given only fine weather all should be well. The French are also biffing; everywhere in fact it is the 'Gambler's throw' for us—*i.e.*, if this 'biff' comes off anything may happen. Of course I still think they will just stick 10 miles back in a new line. Cochrane, i/c 3rd Brigade, thinks all this fighting is merely a German rear-

<sup>1</sup> Henry's contemporary at Eton. See Chapter II.

guard action, while they get every one back, including their heavies. They hardly use anything bigger than 5·9's. Rather depressing if he's right, and he might easily be too. . . ."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Midday, 15th September.*

"The Division started at 6.20 this morning, and we—the *embusqués*—have now moved up still nearer to the line, or rather to what was the line before they started. So far, from all accounts, everything has gone extremely well. The weather is excellent, thank Heaven!—and the 'Great Surprise' is reported to have pulverised the Germans, who fled in panic. What it is you will no doubt see in the Press ere long. We are all—*i.e.*, the transports of the whole Brigade—bivouacked on a hillside where we shall stay, who knows? It may be two hours or two days. With any luck one or two of the officers will go up to-night—it depends on the casualties. Heaven grant they are light. The servants all appeared here this morning from the Battalion. Leslie C., I am delighted to hear, has gone to the trench mortars—whether permanently or not of course I don't know. But as he has never seen a trench mortar, I should think it would be rather droll. A report just in reports 300 prisoners already in and the Division nearly at their third objective—superb. Given continued fine weather anything may happen. Six Divisions of Cavalry are all up here, waiting for the moment."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Sunday, 17th September.*

"The great 'biff' is over, and the Guards Division is no more, at least until we get up the



new drafts. Counting every one, I don't suppose we shall get more than about 280 men together. The 3 Coldstream Battalions can only muster 400 men between them. The officers' losses have been appalling. Ours are as follows: Lionel Norman, Martindale, Holland, and I'm afraid old Tim killed, Leslie very badly wounded, David Barclay hit on the head, Miller in the chest, Daniell slightly, Hugh Ross slightly and awful shell-shock. The Coldstream in one Brigade—the 2nd—have lost 16 officers—8 killed—the 3rd Grenadiers 17—4 killed, including Raymond Asquith. The Battalion, with the rest of the 1st and 2nd Brigade, started the attack at 6.20 on Friday morning. Trafford, transport officer, brought back a message that they wanted me, so I went up with him on Friday night. After various vicissitudes I arrived at Brigade Headquarters at about 1 on Saturday morning. General Ponsonby refused to let me go up that night and try and find the Battalion, as no one knew where any one was, so I slept—intermittently—on the floor of Brigade H.Q., and after an excellent breakfast at about 6, started off with the Brigade orderlies as guide. The position was somewhat as follows:—



“The remnants of the 2nd Brigade were ensconced in T T, the old German 1st line. I didn't know this, but we realised that they were somewhere in the trench X-T, so we tooled along the path, across the sunk road, till we got to the road from Ginchy: on this we found such a cross-fire—machine-guns and snipers in shell-holes from the right—that after crawling back, we decided it was no go that way. We got hold of a stretcher, however, and carried back a wounded man in the Batt., whom we discovered at ‘W,’ and worked our way back gradually to Brigade. About 200 yds. from Brigade there was a dressing station, and I asked there if any one knew where the Batt. was. They said vaguely in the X-T line, so another attempt had obviously to be made. The Brigade orderlies said it was impossible to get up. However, this appeared to be rot, so I set off with a Doctor, who, as luck would have it, was looking for the Batt.—our old one having been hit.

“Well, he and I started off (our journey is defined by dots.....). We had just got to B, when a rather large Hun barrage started—some people were attacking, and this of course was to prevent us bringing up supports, &c. The Doctor and I and a Grenadier stretcher-bearer, who was with us, rushed to a shell-hole, where we sat for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, while the thing went on. Luckily we had chosen a lucky hole, as though rather large shells came unpleasantly close, we didn't get hit by anything. Added to this, the people on the right turned on machine-guns, which whizzed over our heads. Things subsided at last, however, and we went on, and at last got into the trench where the road joins it. Here I lost the Doctor, who stayed to dress some one, and I, hearing

there were Scots Guards along to the left, went along there. Several hundred yards along I found a Sergeant and about 10 men of Right Flank—the only 1st Batt. men to be found in that bit of the trench. The 2nd Batt. were just beyond these people, with only 4 officers left. They had had about 14 casualties—only two killed though. After I and my small command had sat in this trench for about an hour, I saw an officer of the 1st Irish, who told me that the Batt. were along the trench to the right of the road, so we proceeded along; and at last, after a most congested passage, reached the chaps. Eric, Colonel Godman, Ellis, Boyd Rochfort, Luss Colquhoun, and Powell were the total complement. Holmes and Mungall were away on carrying fatigues, and I was made welcome in a German dug-out. We had an excellent picnic lunch, with the 2nd Irish, off German rations, cooked up, soda-water, and biscuits, &c.—all Boche, and how good. They do things magnificently *sans doute*. All the men have soda-water, ours have filthy chlorinated stuff brought up in petrol tins, and their meat ration (the equivalent of our bully-beef) delicious. Well, there we stayed all yesterday—heavily shelled all the afternoon from away on the right. One shell killed poor Mark Tennant and his orderly—the last of the Brigade machine-gunners—all killed except 2 wounded. As there were only about 300 men in all four regiments, the Colonel, who was in charge of the Brigade, decided to send back several officers—Ellis, Boyd Rochfort, and I were going. The two former went off about 6—it was now getting dark or rather dusk, tolerably safe from the shooting from the right. I stayed behind, as I was going to guide down a ration



party of 60 men. We teed off at 8, and went down to Brigade, when we found—better far than any rations—the news that we were going to be relieved, which we were in another hour. We marched up on Tuesday, a Battalion about 750 strong—we came down last night 142. Probably when every one comes in we shall have about 280. We are now in a camp, well behind, thank Heaven! and I don't see how we can ever go back into the trenches for a very long time. Of course one never knows, but there will be a tremendous amount of reconstruction work. I am looking forward to a lot of training work. Leave, I think, will reopen almost at once.

“Guillemont, Ginchy—two names that won't be forgotten in a hurry, except by our dear ones at home in England, where the Cuffley Zeppelin is more enthralling than a mere battle. You can't imagine anything like the ground. The whole place is one mass of shell-holes—literally merging one into the other. Guillemont simply doesn't exist, except as a scarred wound. Ginchy is only a little better, and my hat, the sights! It is better not to write about these things to people who realise what the war is, such as you; but there ought to be photographs taken of these battlefields and shown in every town of every country in the world, and then could the world go to war? I doubt it. Not even the Germans could look with complacency on the awful, grinning, greenish-black faces with their staring sightless eyes and yellow teeth of men dead a day or two, or the awful mottled wax-like pallor of the newly-fallen corpse. What a thing it is, this blasted war as it is made now. Simply machinery against which the finest men in the world are impotent. The Germans give themselves up



wholesale, and make hardly any resistance except in places. Yet here is the Division, reduced to a handful after just this one attack. Simply gun-fodder. Wiring is impossible for me. At least I don't see how I can do it up here. I would if I could, but it is almost impossible up here. As a matter of fact, I have just sent one off per Harold Boyd Rochfort, who is going back with the cavalry. They can't get any water up here, and so we are going back a bit to return as they say, but I doubt it.

"I send you an officer's note-book, Boche: it might be interesting. Flowers found in it—some poor heart-broken Gretchen."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Monday, 18th September.*

"Just to intensify the general jolliness of the situation, the rain has been driving in sheets across this foul plain since early this morning. The casualties keep rolling up, and, to crown all, comes the news that we have got to go back to-morrow night and relieve the 20th Division in the line. Hell! One can't realise the casualties just yet, but old Willie<sup>1</sup> has been killed, Oliver Leese very badly hit, also Lionel Neame. In the 2nd Coldstream, their Battalion, only Reggie Craufurd and one Laing came out unhit. In the 3rd Coldstream only 2 also. In our Brigade the 2nd Irish had 10 officer casualties. The 3rd Grenadiers 17, including 6 killed, of whom Eric's brother was one, and the wretched 1st Coldstream had about 16 or 17—10 killed. Perfectly heart-rending. The officer casualties have been out of all proportion to the men. The latter were bad,

<sup>1</sup> His great friend, Willie Edmonstone, 2nd Coldstream Guards.

however. The whole thing was completely done in by the Staff. You will have read about the 'Tanks.' A good idea, but must be improved upon. The things are under horse-powered. This rain will probably stop any more 'biffing,' and I hope to Heaven it does. Almost all the Divisions down here are about 3000 strong, and the Germans have got lines behind stretching for miles. Our artillery are improving amateurs—*c'est tout*. Of course, having all one's friends killed makes one rave rather—but this attacking is a failure, I'm certain. We lose far more than the Germans do. And then one sees that 180,000 are employed on the air defences of Great Britain. Stout fellows—1 Zeppelin in 2 years. Jolly good, and the filthy Press and the damned people go on as if it were the biggest thing of the whole War. Poor Raymond Asquith was a gallant man—could have been on any staff he'd wanted."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Tuesday, 19th September.*

"Still in this camp, but we probably go up into the reserve trenches at Waterlot Farm to-night. It has been pouring since yesterday morning early, but now, thank Heaven! it has stopped, and it looks as if we might have a dry march up. A big draft has just come in from the Entrenching Battalion, and we have now got about 700 men in the Battalion—once more ripe for the slaughter. Poor old Guy Baring, the Colonel of the 1st Coldstream, was buried yesterday. The rain poured down the whole time—a melancholy spectacle. But very impressive. Leslie Childers, I'm glad to say, is going on as well as can be expected, but poor David Barclay

is very bad. Shot in the face somewhere, he is blind in both eyes, and his hand is very badly shattered—and only 19½, 5 days younger than I am. What a wicked thing this damned War is. I should like to have pointed out to me just precisely where all the honour and glory lies. It is curiously elusive. I am quite the hard-worked young officer just now, as I am doing Bombing Officer and ordinary company duty as well. Barne, the second in command, has taken on 'B' Company till we get more Company Commanders out. Jack Stirling is commanding the 2nd Battalion till the advent of Norman Orr-Ewing. He will feel Tim's death frightfully, as we all do, but especially myself. He was always perfectly charming ever since I came out, and of course one's Company Commander can make or mar one's happiness more or less. I shall miss him frightfully.

"Well, will write from Waterlot to-morrow, but perhaps we may not go up till then."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
20th September.

"Our departure from this camp, originally intended for yesterday, has been put off till this evening, when we go off to a place about a mile away, where the 2nd Battalion have been. They, with the rest of the 3rd Brigade and the 1st Brigade, go up to-night. We—the 2nd Brigade—are in support this time. The newspapers afford us food for much bitter merriment. Even the 'Daily Mail' announces 'Light losses in the Great Advance.' The Guards Division losses are 4500 men and about 150 officers—that is, out of, roughly, 8400 man and 216 officers: not too bad.



In the 2nd Brigade Machine-Gun Company—our Brigade—there were 9 officers—7 were killed and 2 wounded. Poor Mark Tennant, after coming through the actual biff, was killed by a shell on Saturday afternoon, just along the trench in which we were. I think a rather charming little officer in the Prussian Guard summed up the situation. On being asked what was going to happen, he simply said, ‘Well, you won’t win the War, nor shall we. We can’t kill all your men, and you can’t kill all ours.’ That is just about it. My watch arrived yesterday all right. The French are doing a biff this morning—at least there is the hell of a bombardment going on towards the south. . . . Well, don’t get alarmed if you don’t hear from me for a day or two. I’ll try and write to-morrow, or at any rate shoot off a Field Post-card.

“Beith couldn’t have written ‘The first 100,000’ about this phase of the War. Thank Auntie Babby for her delightful letter. She will doubtless see this.”

“1ST SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*21st September (or 22nd, I’ve lost count).*”

“Here we are still in our curious cave-dwellings, but we move up to-night, and go in where needed, as the Brigade is in Divisional Reserve. The 1st and 3rd Brigades are biffing this time—we and the 1st did last time. A glorious day to-day, which is a joy. The weather has the most amazing psychological effect on every one. Guts, for instance. I always feel four times as valorous when the sun is shining. I am writing this in Tom’s tent. He is in charge of a 9th Lancers digging-party up here—all his Regiment and most of the rest of the Cavalry have gone back



to water, and I don't think they'll come back again. Once more all idea of getting the Cavalry through has had to be abandoned, so now I hope they will realise the fact, and turn a good many of them into Infantry—especially all the 2nd Line Yeomanry . . . at home. No incidents of any sort to narrate. I saw Nigel again yesterday, an excellent chap. I am extremely busy just now arranging about bombs and things for the chaps to take up. I have got to get 1440 up this afternoon. I don't blame any one for not realising the War from the newspapers. Of course I suppose it is quite right that they shouldn't dwell on the casualties, but it's absurd that all the people at home, idle and otherwise, should be continually told that everything is going splendidly. To judge from the way they shove the same Divisions in again and again into the attack till they're practically wiped out, they haven't any too many men in reserve. Of course they want them for the Air Defences of England. 200,000 men so employed—and 1 Zeppelin—jolly good."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Sunday, 24th September.*

"Another beautiful day. Sky, &c., a thing that always makes life pleasant. Tom's <sup>1</sup> lot are doing a move at a moment's notice, and depart this morning back to the Regiment. I suppose they have sensibly enough abandoned all thoughts of a Cavalry beat-through. This afternoon the Colonel and I are going up to have a look at the places where we are going to-morrow. The Pipers have now joined us, and play daily. Yesterday Tom came down. He really is most congenial,

<sup>1</sup> T. S. Hankey, 9th Lancers ; Eton Eleven, 1914.

of the type that weeps with joy at the pipes. They played 'The Blue Bonnets' quite magnificently, which I think is the greatest of all pipe tunes. Yes, Bob is a delightful person. I got a letter from him which made me laugh, even on the day after our biff, when all the casualties were just being made known. I'm seriously thinking of becoming A.D.C. to Ewart. No one gets any kudos for being out here from the world at large. I must say the Munitions people are rather splendid the way they hoof the lads out of their Clubs. Imagine the system applied in Edinburgh. Leishman's Insurance Committee forcing the members of the New Club to seek refuge in the Caledonian Hotel. Rather a humorous tableau. I must say I envy the people who are incapable of feeling. It saves them an awful lot. Truly detachment is no mean quality. There is no better way of solving the big problems of life than ignoring them. What fun word-juggling is. I do like people who know how to use our English language, or at least have an inkling that way. Have you read 'The Brook Cherith'? Most offensive, I should think. G. Moore I dislike frankly. Thanks awfully for the Bible—a most convenient size. The sack has also arrived. Till to-morrow—I will write before we go up, and then probably Field Post-cards for a day or two, or perhaps not even that, as I shall be very busy."

*"26th September 1916.*

"Still in jolly old Trônes Wood, which became rather less jolly this morning, when they sent over divers H.E. Souvenirs, killing the sick Sergeant—*i.e.*, the Doctor's Sergeant—in the process. The attack yesterday was a magnificent

success, as far as we were concerned,<sup>1</sup> also the French and the Division on the south, but, alas! the Division on our left or north got hung up; they are attacking again to-day, but I am afraid the Boche has had time to dig in again, and so the thing will recommence. It was ridiculous that they had not got the supports right up and ready to rush through. Did not Cavan say that there were ten fresh Divisions, a hundred thousand men, waiting to go out, but we never have the necessary supports up to make the thing decisive. We get out objectives and then dig in, and of course the Boche does the same, and so it goes on. Combles is now surrounded, or very nearly, as the French have got Frégicourt and we Morval. The Division on our left is held up in front of Gueudecourt; we shall probably move up to-night to take over the line from the other two Brigades, who deserve to come out after what they did yesterday; then we shall stay in a day or two; then probably the whole Corps will come out for a fortnight or three weeks; then I think we shall have to go back to the Salient. I know nothing of course, but I have a sort of feeling we shall. I enclose two 'snaps,' as X. might say, of self, Salient ones,—the undressed one is on the old Canal bank with Miller, now wounded, but going on very well, as is Leslie Childers, I am thankful to say. Our 2nd Batt. did magnificently yesterday; Jack Stirling, I hear, was superb, but I shall get all details to-night, as we shall probably relieve them. Most distressing this morning, Ivan and I were both embarking on a supplementary cup of tea after breakfast, when a d—d shell burst, it seemed, about a foot off (really about 40 yards); anyhow, it filled our

<sup>1</sup> The 2nd Brigade were in reserve and were not required.



cups with earth, leaves, and stuff, and completely ruined what would have been a great tissue restorer. Two of our Company have already gone up as carrying parties. Helen Neaves' letter is charming, but I fear ultra-sanguine. A most uncomfortable night last night on hard boards in a dug-out, and in the middle, about one A.M., a message for the Adjutant arrived to say that a warning had come in about gas shells; topping. However, the alarm proved to be false. The Colonel is charming—a most gallant man; I hope he is not missing the trained hand of Eric in the Adjutantal department excessively.<sup>1</sup> Ralph Gamble is coming into the 1st Coldstream in this Brigade, which is splendid.

“The Corps news-sheet came out last night with some rather interesting German comments on our Artillery, which they say is good; they are also rushing their Divisions about pretty rapidly, but I think if they choose to hold the Cambrai line they can stop on on this front for a very long time. You can't imagine what the country is like—all the woods consist of stark bare poles rising up from a tangled mass of barbed wire, undergrowth, and great shell-holes everywhere. The open looks exactly as if a gigantic plough had been run across it irregularly. Everywhere are dumps of material and ammunition, most of them derelict. The wastage must be appalling, but, after all, they don't often get a chance of spending five million pounds a day, these magnates in Whitehall! Asquith has been hard hit in this: Raymond A., Mark Tennant, and Bim Tennant, the Glenconner son, all killed. All the heads frightfully bucked yesterday, congratulatory messages crowding each other down

<sup>1</sup> Henry was at this time Acting-Adjutant. Age 19.



the telephone wires, and well the first and third Brigades deserve all the praise they got. There is no doubt the Division are superb, and are followed very closely by the 9th, the 15th, and 20th. The 9th and 15th, both Scotch, and the 20th, chiefly K.R.R. My only hope is that the casualties haven't been too appalling, such a lot of one's friends were going through hell yesterday; so far, the only sensible thing about the War I have seen is an extract from a German paper in the 'Times': 'It is ludicrous for people at home to talk about the glorious day of battle; such expressions as this are simply the result of lacking imagination, coupled with complete security and comfort. Our soldiers are going through hell on the Somme, nothing more and nothing less.' How true; the farther from the front the more delightful does the War appear, till it reaches the apogee of general jollity in London drawing-rooms. I may be able to write in the line, as apparently they can get things up all right."

*"Thursday, 28th September.*

"In the front line to-day since Monday night, but to-night we go back into support, and on the night of the 30th we come out. The whole Division then goes back into rest behind Amiens, so I'm told. The attack of the third Brigade on Monday was a marvellous performance. We relieved the 2nd Battalion, who came out only about 250 strong. They only had 8 officers in the battle, of whom 3 were killed. Menzies, I'm glad to say, survived, also Victor C. Baillie. Jack Stirling, who did magnificently, told us some wonderful stories of 2nd Batt. men hit twice, even three times, and insisting on going on. Marvellous

chaps. Norman O. E. is now out here, with 'Dumps' Coke (Corsham) as Adjutant. J. Stirling is, I think, remaining as 2nd i/c, and a Major. In the attack on Monday, in the three Grenadier Battalions, out of 12 Coy. Commanders, 10 were hit. The 4th Batt. had all four killed. Our job has simply been holding the line, which hasn't been too easy, as the whole thing is so frightfully disconnected. I have been working incredibly hard—at the telephone all day and all night. During the last four nights I have had about 8 hours' sleep all together. But it is great fun! I just love running a Battalion, though I wonder what the Colonel thinks. He is a delightful man, sound and shrewd and pawky, and a real topper. We in the 2nd Brigade were very lucky not to have had a second dose like the other two. On the 15th the 3rd Brigade were in reserve, but they had as much to do as the two front Brigades. We have had nothing to do—though on Monday we were waiting in Trônes Wood, expecting to go up at any moment. The Boche, I think, is in no mood for retaliatory aggression, but he is digging in quite peaceably about 2000 yds. away on the west in front of Le Transloy despite our Artillery attentions. I can't help thinking that we ought to have been shoved in yesterday, when the Division on our left made another local attack, and so get the whole ridge. I can't see what good these comparatively small (3 and 4 Divisions) attacks do. We take a bit of ground, stop for three days, and the Boche digs in quite comfortably, and so it goes on. As a matter of fact, the 14th Corps, and in it, principally us and the 20th Division, have taken more in two biffs each than all the other people did in two and a half months. But it is sad to think that

all the ground we win back is hardly worth the winning. We are up by the side of Les Bœufs, which is being shelled to hell by the Boche, while Flers and Gueudecourt present the most lamentable spectacle. Three years ago smiling villages, nestling among the trees here and there across a green plain—now a shell-scarred desert with here and there a heap of stones and rubbish, and a stark trunk or two. THE GREAT WAR. The ration party will take this up to-night, so all will be well. There is absolutely nothing to report, they say, except that I am pitifully dirty and abnormally sleepy. But what matter—rest in a day or two and equally—Leave.”

“29th September.

“Here we are in the support line—to-morrow we go back to tents or billets, and something for the night, and then on 2nd October we join a train to the No. 4 Training Area, S.W. of Amiens. Well out of this foul zone, and then I really believe leave will be open. I am about 5th for it, so the middle of October ought to see me packing my grip and tooling across the Channel: it is really too good to believe, so I am anticipating a sudden call back from our training area and being hurled afresh into the fight—but, with luck not. Honestly, I believe, the Boche are getting rather ‘blithered.’ The Colonel told me that Churston, who is a city ‘knut,’ told him that the Hamburg-Amerika Line were insuring their ships from derelict mines up to any amount as from 1st January ’17; and do you see that all wives, &c., of German officials have got to be out of Belgium by that date? Significant, *very*. Also we have got some interesting news off



prisoners *re* artillery disinclination to fire. Shortage? I wonder. It makes us all rather sick to hear all this rot about the Tanks, which weren't nearly as effective as gas was at its first attempt, which is the one thing we can judge their success by. They did good work certainly in the cases in which there were good men inside them, but to say they were a decisive element is bosh. Every one is very glad to be out. This line we are in is the original German first line, which we took on the 15th. The Colonel, the Doctor, and self are in an excellent German dug-out, and Witt met me with my rubber-bed, which I got from poor old Ned Holland. Ye Gods! how I slept—hog-like. It is now 5, and the rations have just come up, so I must rush off and post this."

"B.E.F., 30th September.

"We leave our line this evening and go to bivouacs somewhere for the night, and then tomorrow we go off somewhere in a train. There is no word of leave, and I should think we must be prepared for one more go in the line at least. I can't think that they will send us over again—it will be the greatest mistake, as we have now just got the nucleus for building up the Division again. But these people behind simply send in every Division till it ceases to exist—cf. the 20th in this corps—a magnificent Division, who among other things took Guillemont. On the 14th they were 3200 strong—the normal strength of a Division is about 10,000—yet since then they have been in almost constant action. Poor dears. I am in rather a gloomy frame of mind this morning, for in the morning I took out some men to bury old Joe Lane, the Adjutant of



Willie's Batt.—the 2nd Coldstream. We also buried about 8 men of the Regiment, all killed on the 15th. Not very jolly. I have got an extremely good letter from 'Blacker' which you might like to see, so I enclose it. A great man. Hugh Macnaghten every fortnight sends a sort of letter all about Eton to all his pupils out here. Foss Prior was an Eton Master and a topper. He was in the 60th.

"We have discovered where old Tim was buried, so we've got a cross made out, and are going out to . . . put it up. Poor old Tim, and Willie and Bunny Pease, Lionel Norman, and a hundred others. If they'd had another corps ready to hurl in on the 26th, all would have been well. But of course they hadn't got them up, and so it will be all done over again—800 yards in advance.

"How great and glorious is war.

"I shan't be sorry to get a bath, as I am incredibly dirty, and clothes on since last Saturday.

"Till to-morrow, when I hope to be writing from a pleasanter clime."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Thursday, 5th October.*

"The best has happened, and I arrive in London some time on Tuesday, the 10th, at Waterloo. Leave a message at the Guards Club where you are to be found. I get 8 days certainly—possibly 10—but anyhow all arrangements can be made when we meet.

"Eric has gone as acting Brigade Major while the latter is on leave, so I am again doing Adjutant—add all the bombing, and I find myself pretty hard worked. To-morrow there is going to be a

great show—Geoffrey Feilding is coming over to give ribbons to people—*i.e.*, the men. Among the officers Iain Colquhoun got a D.S.O., and old Ronny Powell a Military Cross. Here is a list of the Divisional officers' casualties, Sept. 10–30 :—

	Killed. Died of Wounds.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Grenadiers . . .	27	45	4	76
Coldstream . . .	23	34	3	60
Scots . . . . .	14	17	...	31
Irish . . . . .	8	18	5	31
Welsh . . . . .	5	11	...	16
	77	125	12	214

Pretty shattering. I am going to ride over and see the 1st Coldstream this afternoon. . . .

“Coming home entirely defies verbal analysis.

“*P.S.*—Can Rosalind be got hold of?”

The Division, or what was left of it, had earned their rest, and on the 1st of October they were on the point of moving right back 16 miles S.W. of Amiens. To Henry it was a joy to find “a village quite intact; a field absolutely unscarred by war; a wood which is still a wood, and not a sort of glorified Lancers' bivouac. I am still Adjutant, as Eric has gone on billeting. We join him to-morrow morning, when I surrender the Seals of Office. I can honestly say the last week has been the best I have had out here, if it wasn't for the awful death and devastation. I love work, and my hat! one gets it as Adjutant.”

Leave was now opening again, and, as he had

just told us, his turn was to come in a few days. On 7th October he dined with the 1st Coldstream, of whom he writes that "the battle has changed that Battalion more, I think, than any other, but there are still some great friends of mine there, notably Ralph and Jeffery Holmesdale, Bridge, &c. Charles Hambro is unfortunately going to the 3rd Battalion."

And a few days later he was in London.

### III. THE SOMME—*continued.*

Leave was spent principally in London. He was due to return to France at the end of October, but there were several false starts, occasioned apparently by submarine activity in the Channel, and it was only on 4th November that he wrote:—

"Crossed at last, and by a great stroke secured the Captain's cabin, and slept peacefully in a bed all night. Most of the people had religiously stayed down there (Southampton) since Saturday, sleeping on the boat and reporting to Authorities at intervals of two hours. Poor dears."

He had spent the intervening days with his mother in London, and was strong in the moral support of Major Eric Greer and Captain Charles Moore of the Irish Guards, who were on this occasion his companions in good fortune. They

journeyed out together, and this was the beginning of a great friendship between him and Major Greer, which was doomed, however, to last less than nine months.

On arrival at his Battalion he found them in the line, and sunk deep in the Somme mud. This at the time was so shocking that it took the wounded two days to get down from Lesbœufs to Bernafay Wood—a distance of about four miles.

The future plans of the Division were sketched, so far as he felt himself permitted to allude to them, in a letter of this time, and shortly afterwards they were reported to be in camp on the Carnoy-Montauban road, the front line up to which they went from those quarters being near that place of terror, Trônes Wood. At other times between now and the end of the year, we hear of his being near Le Transloy or in a dug-out by the side of a hill beside the road to Combles, and, except when temporarily luxuriating in the comparative comfort of a French camp upon a well-chosen site, “from which we move on to a place chosen by our own Staff where there is no shelter of any sort,” he ever reverts to the mud and the hardship for the men; “though, remember,” he says, “when I refer to the filthiness of the conditions, it only refers to this Somme sector from Hebuterne



to Saily Saillisel. Everywhere else both sides are in the same trenches that they were in last winter, and consequently all right."

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
15th December.

"Once more we have emerged from the line. Last night the Battalion dragged itself through the mud to the French camp, which it reached between the hours of 11.30 and 4.30 this morning—was roused up this morning to come on here to another camp, where we stay for two days. Then back to the French camp again for two days—17th, 19th—then the line for two days—19th, 21st, and so on—two more goes in the line after that of two days each. The conditions are getting very bad, and the men suffering frightfully. We—Luss, Ronny Powell, and self—were all right in our dug-out, and slept for 20 hours out of the 24, as the trenches were too bad to go round by day—but the men, poor devils! Only enough ground to stand on, and that they had had to dig out of fearful mud. No materials—because of the difficulty of bringing them up, which is being overcome by the tortoise degrees so dear to our Staff, God bless them! No covering except a waterproof sheet across the trench. Fortunately, the line is—or has been—very quiet as far as war goes, but the weather makes it appalling. But going in is worse, and coming out worst of all. First, a mile over the top—trench impassable—to get to trenches, Battalion Headquarters: on a tortuous track between the shell-holes, mud in varying depths everywhere. Then another two miles to the road—most of

which has been duck-boarded, otherwise it would be impassable, and then  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles' walk on the road. The men got bogged so badly that they had to be hauled out all over the place. Luss and I pulled out about half a dozen ourselves. We found one man in the 2nd Battalion—his identity disc showed—buried up to the neck in a shell-hole, and quite dead—and there are many such.

“Even when we do get out we are never allowed to stay more than two nights in one place—witness this tour—so the poor brutes haven't a chance of getting properly dry. And my hat! they are fed up. No wonder. They, the Infantry in the line, who bear the brunt of the whole thing, get nothing done for them, get paid a pittance compared to any one else, and then get butchered in droves when the fine weather comes. No one would object to being ‘condamnés à la mort,’ as the French pithily describe the Infantry, if there was a little fattening-up attached to it.

“My views about peace are simply these. If we don't consider the German terms, and, if they are reasonable, accept them, we shall probably be in a far worse position this time next year. Due in a great measure to the late Government's two years. Granted, but unfortunately this departure doesn't undo the harm done. What have we to set against the German victories—except their Colonies, and the stifling of their trade—upon which they didn't depend, as we do utterly.

“The Germans give themselves up—those that do—because they are sick of the discomfort, which isn't half what our people go through (who ever saw a British dug-out?), and bored with the thing, as private soldiers, and because they know we treat them like princes.”

It was found during this winter on the Somme, and in this sector especially, that the climatic conditions did not permit of troops remaining in the front line for four or five days on end before being relieved, and he writes of "going into the line" (this time with Left Flank; he had previously been with "C" Company under "Luss" Colquhoun) "for two days; the men can't stand any longer." "Esmond Elliot," again he writes, "I saw this morning just going into the line for the first time with the 2nd Battalion. He was looking very well. That is the worst of this d—d War. I feel so well on it. The Household Battalion were quite close to us, and I went across yesterday to see them. Wyndham Portal fearfully exercised, as they had 180 cases of sickness after one go in the line. Teenie I saw, which was delightful."

The discomforts of this winter campaign were really aggravated for its victims by the extraordinarily unintelligent attitude (to use a charitable epithet) adopted by certain sections of the British Press. It is said that newspapers, pictorial and otherwise, adapt themselves to the tastes of their readers, and in this connection one must therefore assume either that the stay-at-home British public favoured the *suave mari magno* philosophy, or deliberately tried to deceive themselves as to the dangers and hardships which many of the younger men of the country were at that time

voluntarily evading. There is, of course, another explanation (short of crass and unimaginative stupidity, which is, after all, the most probable one)—viz., that our rulers, in their anxiety to recruit with as little opposition as possible those who were making good money and living at their ease at home, desired the Press to paint as rosy a picture as possible of the pleasures of the War! Whatever may have been the explanation, however, it will be in the minds of many that their feelings were being constantly jarred at this time—and throughout the War—by pictures, episodes, and comments which could not have been otherwise than irritating to the men concerned.

The following outburst, contained in a letter towards the end of November, gives the cue to this :—

“ But the Press—particularly the halfpenny Pictorial—is unhinging. Did you see the ‘Daily Sketch’? A large picture of a Battalion plodding through the mud up to the trenches heralded in large type thus, ‘MERRY MUD LARKS ON THE SOMME.’ My God!”

But Henry could not remain irritated or despondent for long together. His friends, his books, his work, his keenness for his men, all kept his mind constantly occupied, and when out of the line he never seemed to be in the same place two days consecutively.



"B.E.F., 26th November.

"I managed to stagger up to the 2nd Irish to lunch with Eric Greer, who was in excellent form. He and I are doing a sort of book. He is doing the drawing, I the verse, about the War. Pleasant rot. He wants to send it to a paper, in fact that is his object. Certainly they are a good deal less bad than the sort of stuff that is taken. . . . Had tea with Eric G. and his Irish H.Q. They are charming. Reid the Colonel, Fitzgerald the Adjutant, and the charming Father Knapp. I am very fond of them all.

"The work goes on apace—*i.e.*, the *œuvre* of Eric and self. The following epigram occurred to me last night :—

'O staff, whom we daily anathematise,  
If you only could hear us you'd soon realise  
That though Pressmen may hail your Gargantuan brain,  
You're the people who cart us again and again.'

"Tea with 1st Grenadiers. Talk of Ypres. Discipline of German prisoners, &c. . . .

"Amiens with Ralph Gamble, Paddy Kinross, &c. . . .

"Lunch with 'Bulgy' Thorne, 3rd Grenadiers." And so on.

Just before Christmas we received from him the following breezy effusion :—

"B.E.F., 23rd December.

"Dinna fash yersel'. I am staying out of the line when they are going up on the 26th—and Jasper Plowden. I am going to Amiens to-morrow. Shall do Christmas there. Not pleasant. We

relieve the 2nd Battalion in the line on the 1st. Cheery-ho! The Tron!! Hech!!! And then come out for good—*i.e.*, a month or so on the 3rd, and about time, as our numbers are frightfully down owing to sickness. We only go into the line about 300 strong, and there are many Battalions worse than that.” And then, with a burst of affection as precious as it was rare in these virile letters of his, “Au revoir, darlings. I love you.”

Shortly afterwards we learned from him how he and his friend Jasper Plowden had bettered their instruction—an escapade which not only brought a nest of official hornets about their own ears, but involved their long-suffering but greatly forgiving comrades of the Division as well. It was a tribute to the spirit of comradeship that prevailed in the Battalion that he was able to write about these affairs a month later. “I think the leave is going to be put on again shortly. No one was in the least sick about it in the Battalion. All charming.”

How the two days’ leave to Amiens developed into something more attractive is told in the following letters to us and to his cousin Rosalind Grant:—

“HÔTEL RITZ, PLACE VENDÔME, PARIS,  
25th December, 12.1 A.M.

“Me voilà once more in civilisation—and in the Gay City at that—for a brief space. Having been left out of the line and free of all duty till we have to rejoin the Battalion on the evening

of the 28th, Jasper Plowden and I decided to go to Amiens, which stands very much to Paris, *me judice*, as, shall we say, Leicester to London. So on arrival at Amiens, we decided to come on here, which we did by the afternoon train, and arrived envers 5.45. Mon Dieu—never did I imagine that mere bodily comfort could mean so much. After all, going on ordinary leave, one generally manages to clean up at Havre or Boulogne, so it isn't the same as this when we practically walked out of the line—and a bloody line at that—into the most amazing comfort. First, a wonderful room with bathroom attached—then in the said bathroom a bath, which mere words are quite inadequate to describe. Boiling water, huge towels, a tiled floor, a-a-achh!! Then—dinner—melon, consommé, plât de sole, poulet, pêche Melba, and chablis cup—I nearly burst. Then we staggered off to a Music Hall, and sat in a comatose condition throughout the performance—as bad as any in London, but extremely vulgar and hence almost tolerable—whence we have just returned. The only fly in the ointment is that when we report to M. Brett, the A.P.M., to-morrow, he will probably make us go back to Amiens, as I expect there is some absurd rule about not being allowed here unless one is on formal leave—as if Paris couldn't hold every one with the enterprise and opportunity to get there. However, nous verrons—and, after all, nothing can rob me of my bath and dinner, which I shall always look back on as one of the great events of my life. Jasper is a charming companion.

“Paris itself I have not yet seen, as it was quite dark when we arrived—that is a joy reserved for the next day or two, should Brett prove

tractable. It rained almost without ceasing during our sojourn at our camp, so what the trenches will be like I shudder to think, when the chaps again go into them. I am beginning to lose all interest in things military—even that grain which I once possessed. The whole thing is such an utter impasse. Here am I—17 months in the Regiment—7 months in this country—four months' instructorship at home—and still a d—d second-lieutenant with no prospect of ever being anything else. The Swiss attitude is humorous—that of Woodrow merely silly, still not half as fatuous as all the Europeans, who refuse to see when a joke has ceased to be humorous. War, always overrated because invariably written about by non-combatants, is entirely played out as a method of settling disputes. Nothing is worth the misery this War has caused—there I so heartily agree with Ralph Gamble—not even that myth—which Radicals deny the existence of—the Empire, or anybody else's for that matter, and yet of course it is impossible to say that seriously. Well, I wonder . . . a subject for discussion. 'The merrie chimes of Yule ring out their message of peace and goodwill.' I expect a few parsons to-day will cause laughter in heaven."

"HÔTEL RITZ, PLACE VENDÔME, PARIS,  
*27th December.*

"To-night our New Arabian night is over, and we return to-morrow morning at 10.5 to Amiens and the beyond. It has been quite delightful. It will be interesting to see what the authorities do say, as we have apparently broken—unwittingly—all the Laws of the Medes and Persians. Nothing annoys the Staff more than to discover that some



one in the Infantry has managed to filch a day or two of life untarnished by mud and trenches from their tenacious grasp.

“On Xmas Day occurred the most amazing thing of all. Crossing the Rue de la Paix, who should we meet but Tom Hankey, also on leave—amazing coincidence. We were both for the moment speechless, and then of course rushed into each other’s arms. Since then we have combined. In the afternoon of the 25th we went to a French version of ‘Please help Emily’—amusing, having seen it in London. In the evening, after dining like kings at Henry’s, we went to the Casino de Paris to a revue—the French Gertie Millar, a woman Mistinguett—what a woman, an artist to the finger tips, incredibly attractive—did the Early Victorian scene out of ‘More.’ The man indifferent, and the whole scene big and garish after the Ambassadors, but Mistinguett superb—and the amazing thing is that she is at least 35, if not more. To-day we went again and gained an entrée by (a) going upon the stage and having our fortunes told, one of the items of the revue, by her, and (b) by sending round a note composed by Tom, Jasper, and self, signed ‘Sunningdale’—an invented peer! The result was that Jasper and I went round and saw her this evening. We chatted, and are going to see her again to-morrow. A tremendous coup—if, and when, as she says she intends to—she comes to London. An amazing personality—with ‘une allure.’ Mon Dieu! I am an extraordinary person—I love that type of stunt—it has all the zest of some big conquest—doing the Eilburn hole in 3, or converting a try from the corner flag.

“English officers ought to be sent here on Educational tours. I stood in the Place de la Concorde this morning, feeling exactly like the Queen of Sheba. Their meanest street here is as fine as Piccadilly. Of course, I have only had a *coup d'œil*—just enough to realise that after the War we must come here and see it properly. The Louvre—shattering. Unfortunately, the pictures are shut up, but we went over what sculpture there was open. The Arc de Triomphe, as against the Marble Arch. Ugh! The Americans are interesting. Did you read an extraordinarily interesting letter in the ‘Times’ of the 26th by an American journalist? What clods we are—also see the ‘World’ this week. Apparently the Liberal idea is to appear friendly to the new Government—though all the time loathing it—and then when Ld. George and Co. have got unpopular with the country by bringing in strong—and uncomfortable—measures of economy, &c., for winning the War, to boot them out, make peace, and take all credit for it. They evidently think that all the British are as low as themselves. Perhaps, and they aren’t far wrong. I wonder how many seats Asquith would get to-morrow? Not so few as one thinks.

“The British are not very much in evidence here, which is a great blessing—but all the same, I sometimes wish that the Place Vendôme, upon which our window looks out, with its column in the middle, could suddenly turn into ‘St Andrew Square’! I haven’t mentioned the War in this epistle. This place and its joys will make me forget it for some time. Cheery-ho!

“A guid New Year tae ye, and a fine Hogmanay nicht, and mony a Deoch-an-Doris tae

toast the laddies in what's awa' on the Somme—and the auld Jocks, and auld Scotland itsel' for ever ! ”

“ 1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
*Thursday, 28th December.*

“ Just returned from the Gay City, to find that the Battalion is not coming straight to this camp to-night, as they have been shelling the railway by which the latter half of the journey is generally made. We found Cecil Trafford in Amiens with a Flying Corps tender buying food, so we came along with him. I found a wonderful collection of letters waiting for me. Delightful. Thank you so much for the money and the food when it arrives. . . . It must be quite incredibly damnable sitting at home with these non-carers still playing a large part and hearing scandals—cf. the staff man's D.S.O. for making tea—as fresh news which are quite ordinary occurrences out here. But ‘keep a stout heart, good fellow,’ as Fairfax says to Sergeant Meryll. . . . A very good example of the extraordinary wrong-headedness of even good and honest men—and intelligent—has just come to my notice. A nice little man called —— has just joined—though nice, his war-service consists of 16 months *as an A.D.C.* Never mind, he has reformed. But X., his old tutor, writes to him, commending him for his great self-sacrifice, and saying that it is doubly great of him to join, as he was doubtless so valuable on the Staff. An A.D.C. !!! Of course the whole A.D.C. system is one long period of snobbery and intrigue and petticoats. Christmas is certainly a pretty good farce. Yet I suppose there are those who observe it with all time-honoured celebration this year.

“ *P.S.*—And a guid New Year tae ye—the one non-futile greeting.”



"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
31st December 1916.

"I got a delightful letter here to-day on our way into the line for our last go. We are in the support area for a couple of nights, which means that the Battalion is very much split up. All the Companies are in different places, and we—Headquarters—are here. I am doing Adjutant, as Eric has been left out, and of course am enjoying myself. It always thrills me. We are in some dug-out shelters on the side of the road. We mess in a little room upstairs, and sleep in a dug-out about 30 feet down, German, and therefore wonderful, of course: four bedrooms with four beds—all boarded up with doors between each room. There sleep the Colonel, Miles Barne, the Doctor, and self—and we are not uncomfortable.

"The weather is incredibly vile—so wet and warm. If only it would really freeze hard.

"An interesting and encouraging thing occurred, I'm told: a Sergeant-Major in the East Kent Regiment, who was captured 6 weeks ago, escaped and came into our lines last night. He says the Boches are fed to the teeth, and have nothing to eat, except bread, soup, and potatoes. No meat, apparently, and they are all sick to death of the War. What fools human beings are to live under a system by which they can be put in such a position as prevails at present. Ninety per cent of every nation want peace, yet the War has to go on. How ludicrous it is.

"I have just finished a sketch of Lord Melville, by one Lovat-Fraser ('Daily Mail'?) sent me by Mary—a magnificent man, verily. I will send it back to you—as I have done with about 15 other books, which will doubtless arrive in due course.



“Hogmanay nicht! Losh me! but it's time we wis stairtin' for the Tron. Hae ye got the bo'le, Wullie? . . .

“I have just finished ‘The Light that Failed,’ and don't quite know what to say about it yet. Marvellously good, but uneven. To me, Torpenhow is the most attractive character in the book. What a wonderful thing friendship is, and how easily misconstrued by the canaille—which includes almost every one, intellectually speaking—into gross homosexuality. It is considered decadent to say, ‘I love so-and-so.’ Yet ‘Love’ is the only word which describes one's feelings to really great friends, and it is only the people who realise that who succeed in the sphere of friendship.

“S. H. G. and Miles B. play chess all day without any cessation, except to eat. There is a lot of work to do, so I am kept pleasantly busy. ‘Britling’ I read two months ago, and at once recommended to you. Do you read my letters? (A question typical of you.) It is very great and marvellously descriptive of the failure of B. & Co. to take advantage of the greatest opportunity that has ever come to the Governors of this country.

“I don't suppose I shall have time for much writing for a day or two, but will do what I can.”

## CHAPTER IV.

JANUARY TO AUGUST 1917.

## I. THE SOMME.

THE Battalion came out of the line on the night of 2nd January, and after five or six miles' march arrived at a railway siding, where the train was to appear to carry them to Corbie—a distance of about eighteen kilometres. "The train appeared about 1.30 . . . we did not arrive here till 11.45 this morning (the 3rd). This just about breaks every limit for any train out here. However, we were going the right way, so nothing mattered."

Some days were spent in and about this town, and besides the enjoyment—as ever—of the social amenities which the presence of many of his friends held out to him, Henry found time for a course of re-reading Scott. "His poems, which, despite obvious blemishes, never fail to delight—especially 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' with its Sunlaws association, and 'The Heart of Midlothian.' My heart leaps every time I look at the title."

*"6th January.*

"I wandered through the cemetery here to-day, where very many have been buried in the last few months. Among others, Guy Leach and Congreve. What a record! V.C., D.S.O., M.C., and Legion of Honour, and within an ace of becoming a Brigadier at 25. Incredible! But what really caught my interest most was a forgotten, uncared-for patch beneath which were buried 5 or 6 Germans who had died in hospital. Poor Fritz Kolner of the 2nd Grenadier Regiment: I can pity him almost as much as John Macdonald of the Clyde R.G.A., who lies a few feet off. It is impossible to blame the individual for the sins of the nation, even though the nation is merely a collection of individuals. That is why all wars are so hateful. Those at the top make them and profit by them, but the rank and file, who bear the burden of it all, what do they get? Nothing—

'Except perhaps the moral beauty  
Which comes to those who do their duty.'

*"B.E.F., 22nd January.*

"A not unenergetic day to-day, constructing a miniature Southfields with pit and everything complete, at which some troops worked this afternoon, undaunted by a snowstorm. Training is the great difficulty at the present moment, or rather the lack of it. We are, at the moment, as much 'untrained levies' as any mob that ever was pressed into the service from the slums of Dusseldorf or Dresden. I was delighted to see in an article in the 'Times'—date forgotten—that

everybody will be starving very shortly, including ourselves.

“These Russians are pretty hopeless, or rather their government. Have you read a book called ‘The Student in Arms’ by one Hankey? Not uninteresting, with some very telling shots at the Church. He maintains, and rightly, that the only chance the Church has of asserting itself after the War is by allowing all clergymen of military age to volunteer for active service. How entirely I agree with this. Priests, as such, have lost credit, partly through their own fault, partly through that of their professional leaders, the Bishops. They argue that there wouldn’t be enough clergymen after the War if they were allowed to run the dreadful risk of being killed. If they only knew anything about men, they would realise that the War has made hundreds of men anxious to look after the spiritual welfare of others, and these men would willingly become clergymen, but not in a ‘dud’ Church. After all, the English Church—and most State Churches—is only a business concern—more or less astutely conducted. Every other city business has had to suffer owing to the War. Why should the Church be exempt? But read the book and see what he says.”

His twentieth birthday occurred on 5th February, and writing just a week before he mentioned that “Ivan is twenty to-day, so we are having a dinner-party. I dislike ‘leaving my teens’ quite inordinately. The kudos out here of being ‘only 19’ is not inconsiderable, and it is sad to think that I have only a week more to bask in



its genial rays. Poor Mum, buck up (a grisly exhortation)—but honestly, so far as safety goes, this is merely like being away for the Eton half.”

It was at this time that Henry first came closely in contact with Sir John Dyer, of whom he afterwards wrote when his two friends were killed in the third battle of Ypres, “John Dyer and Eric Greer are the two worst blows I’ve had. The former, whom of all the people I’ve met since leaving Eton I was fondest of.”

“16th February.

“Last night John Dyer came to dinner, and he and I and Luss and Taylor<sup>1</sup> had a tremendous discussion about religion, priests, their share in the War, &c. The latter argued excellently, and very broad-mindedly, I thought, and the hours slipped by apace. John Dyer (Staff Captain, and late of this Battalion) is delightful, and possesses a sense of humour of no mean order—and this in spite of being a regular soldier: while my admiration of Luss’s mental powers grows daily. He is an admirable companion, and of course an admirable soldier.

“The Brigade have sent out to the four Battalions for a name for Brigade Bombing Officer, so mine has gone in. I’m not sure that I should like it, but of course one could make quite a big thing of it, as Francis Greer was doing when he was killed. I should dislike having to leave the Battalion intensely, but it would be foolish to let an upward step go by—if it is an upward

<sup>1</sup> Rev. C. W. G. Taylor, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion, now Minister of St George’s Parish, Edinburgh.

step—which I doubt. However, all speculation is superfluous, as probably some one else will get the job.”

*“22nd February.*

“ I went to tea with the Brigadier (Lord Henry Seymour, D.S.O., Grenadier Guards, to give him his full title, though he is generally known as ‘Copper,’ from the colour of his hair) yesterday—and the result of our interview was that I go to the Brigade to-morrow as Brigade Bombing and Intelligence Officer. It will be a wrench leaving the Battalion—but it’s obviously a chance, and one of those jobs which one can make quite big. When the Brigade is in the line, the Intelligence side predominates. Then you have to send a daily intelligence report to the Division, culled from the Battalion reports, and your own observations up in the line which one visits periodically. Out of the line bombing comes into the picture when a miniature Southfields has to be inaugurated. The Brigade Staff consists of the Brigadier, Brigade Major, Staff Captain, Signal Officer—also a Staff Captain under instruction. Grigg, the Brigade Major, and editor of the ‘Round Table,’ has just gone as G.S.O. 2 to a Corps, and his successor doesn’t arrive till the 25th, one H. C. Loyd, in the Coldstream, a strong silent man. The Signal Officer is one Trench, an R.E.; the Staff Captain under instruction is Oliver Lyttelton, Alfred’s son, and hence The Head’s nephew; and the Staff Captain is John Dyer of this Battalion, who will be my chief ally. He is a perfectly delightful person, artistic to a degree, and full of humour, with a heart of gold. The change will be interesting—though, as I say, I dislike the departure from the Battalion.

Last night we had an uproarious concert, at which we performed variously. I sang the usual Lauders—a sort of swan-song—and Irwin, one of the newly joined officers, preached an extremely comic ‘sermon.’ Laughter, applause. The weather is foul beyond words—rain, mud, filth. By the way, note change of address—and telephone same to Rosalind—

H. L. D., Esq.,  
Scots Guards,  
Headquarters,  
2nd Guards Brigade,  
B.E.F.”

The following day he reported himself as ensconced at the Brigade—“a member of that Staff which I shall none the less continue to castigate. But a Brigade Staff are so little removed from the Battalion, and goes so frequently into the line, that they cannot be condemned to play the rôle of the pleasure-loving and incompetent *embusqué* so frequently to be met with in higher grades.

“I am glad you take my jeremiads in the right spirit. There is nothing so relieving to the feelings as whole-hearted cursing on paper. But remember, I do mean 50 per cent of what I say, especially *re* Staff.”

He was not long in showing the authorities his aptitude for work, and during the whole of his time at Brigade Headquarters he managed to keep in close touch with his friends in his own



Battalion. "While the Brigade is in the line," he wrote, "I have to devote my attention to the Intelligence side—which, despite its rather promising title, is curiously barren of opportunities for achieving anything of merit or interest. The Brigadier, thank God, has got the impression of my being tremendously keen and hearty (!) Anyhow he said to some one yesterday, 'That lad's a walking maniac. He goes round the line all day, and would go round all night if I let him.'"

From Billon Wood, where were the Brigade Headquarters, he thought nothing of paying a visit to the Battalion, six miles away.

"B.E.F., 26th March.

"In tents by the river. Spent a jocose afternoon with Eric, Luss, and Ivan. The river is very wonderful, pursuing its untroubled way through the scarred valley with the ruined villages on its banks. Not even the Germans can turn it; but of all the works of Nature and man, the sea and the river alone are exempt from their outrages. Abominable creatures, and how damnably good they are. But two years more ought to see their own country in ruins.

"General John<sup>1</sup> is most entertaining with his reminiscences of the early part of the War—compared to which the past year has, with the exception of certain definite shows, been a mild picnic. He, Budget Loyd, and Oliver Lyttelton have fairly astounding records. The General

<sup>1</sup> General Ponsonby had now returned to the command of the 2nd Guards Brigade.



twenty-eight months, Oliver twenty-five months on end, and Budget—most wonderful of all—the whole War, barring seven weeks, twenty months of which were spent as an ordinary Company officer, which of course means infinitely the hardest (because dreariest) work and greatest risk. My own ten months look rather ridiculous beside it. Of course I have had the most surprising gifts from Providence—as have had the whole Battalion since the time I joined. Only one big day—15th September—and even then our casualties were the least in the whole Division. The Signal Officer—Turnbull—is superb ; a Watsonian. He is perfectly at his ease and proud of his country—a true brither Scot—and extremely competent. General J. is delightful, and of course Oliver Lyttelton is the prince of comedians. His imitations are perfect. John Dyer is one of the most charmingly Christian people I have ever met, ‘never-say-an-unkind-word of any one’ school. Ralph Gamble and I went off in a lorry yesterday to the local village—the same that I used to visit for baths in the old days with the Entrenching Battalion—and feasted on omelettes and coffee in the house of an Aunchient French Dame, who seems to be reaping a rich harvest from the British occupation of North France. I think Sunday will see me mounting a steed and paying a visit to the newly occupied area, and look down from the Flers line on those historic fields of September, and revisit sone of those wonderful places of which the British public have now forgotten the names.”

The Guards, of course, did not participate in the battle of Arras and the attack upon the Vimy Ridge which began on 9th April. Just a

week before Henry had been anathematising the weather—"The atrocities of Auld Reekie fall into significance beside the tempestuous excesses of the Somme"—and their present sector. "We've been in this filthy district since 9th November, and it is about time we got out to grass and civilisation and things like that again. No one can rest in this wilderness."

In point of fact the Division remained in the neighbourhood of the river for five or six weeks more, Henry spending part of that time at the 1st Brigade Headquarters for the convenience of bombing arrangements, and shortly after his return to his own Brigade they moved away and fell back into undamaged country preparatory to journeying north once more.

"21st April 1917.

"A blank day as regards writing yesterday owing to the business of going over to the 1st Brigade, where I am now installed *pro tem.*: in fact, so long as the Brigade are at their new Headquarters. Young men arrive to-day for instruction, and henceforward I shall be pretty busy.

"Ma' Jeffreys—the Brigadier of the 1st Brigade—is a magnificent man, Grenadier of the Grenadiers, and extraordinarily good. He is also extraordinarily pleasant, and at the same time of a Spartan severity.

"At the present time he, E. Seymour—G.S.O. II., and General Ponsonby, who is commanding the Division pending the absence of the Major-

General on leave, are talking about Russia. From what they say, the Russians are probably going to make peace in a few weeks—and then of course 'le déluge'—eighty German and Austrian Divisions come posting across.

"One must give up the idea of the Deity having or rather exercising any direct control on events—for reasons of course which we can't explain; otherwise, of course, it is patent that any divine intervention which does occur is on the side of the Boches—*i.e.*, the weather. Every time we biff—rain, rain, rain. Of course, that we can ascribe to the Artillery, I'm absolutely certain. It must have the effect of bringing down the clouds—any shattering bombardment. After two fine days it looks as if it was going to rain this evening—for I am going to play fitba' for the Battalion against some one.<sup>1</sup>

"Life is made more amusing just now by the show now being given by the 3/G.G. people. Quite admirable. It is an amazing tribute to the Brigade, that one can have an officer kissing an officer's servant (doing Cinderella), and the Sergeant-Major—the greatest man in any Battalion probably—flirting with a junior Corporal (an ugly sister), without the smallest diminution of discipline. Magnificent, really. Lunch is on the tapis. Cessation."

C.G.

"7th May 1917.

"I didn't write yesterday, as I was employed all day in a visit to the Brigade—whom I rejoin in a day or two, I'm glad to say, as they are coming back, down to the river again. The 1st Brigade have been charming, but it is always

<sup>1</sup> A six-mile walk to the Battalion—football against the sergeants—dinner—and a six-mile walk back.



pleasant getting back to my own lot again. General John was in rampant form yesterday—and has given us four poems to write for the ‘Daily Dump’—the 2nd Brigade newspaper, which we produce daily—or try to. I’ll send you a copy. In fact here is one—an account of the 3/G.G. show—by Oliver. Not too bad. The weather is as before. We found masses of German bombs in Le Mesnil, where the Brigade were, and now have got rather a good collection of everything British, French, and German—including a delightful little thing of the latter which shoots rather small aerial torpedoes. We’ve also got about 200 of them, so are going to have a show. My eighty young men are doing rather well—the weather is very hopeful. Jeffreys, I have come to the conclusion, rather likes me. Of course being an O.E. starts one off 50 marks up—as he is delightfully rabid on the subject.

“A very good ride yesterday from Le Transloy home *via* Lesbœufs. It’s extraordinary to ride over all that ground again—and see what the Boche saw on those September mornings. My hat! what a wilderness it is—the railway running through it. Since Geddes took over, I think things in that line have pulled up not a little.”

“8th May 1917.

“Rain to-day, which reduced work in the morning to mere talking—and disposed of it altogether, thanks to the confusion in the mind of one of my corporals—a charming Irishman with the D.C.M., who misinterpreted an order—to my secret joy—as a half-holiday is always pleasant. I am at the moment sitting in the hovel which I visited with Ralph about three weeks ago in the town not altogether unassociated, in name at least,



with a certain famous Vicar: the old metropolis of the Entrenching Battalion. Six Canadian soldiers are just going out, so I shall go and sit at the small table which they have vacated. The old hag makes admirable omelettes and coffee. What more can one want? I am also—at the moment—engaged in improving my French, jawing to an old man and his wife about the War—rather giving the impression that the more ships the Germans sink the stronger we become, because I think they are rather impressed with the submarine show. I don't know what to say about it. If our Government really anticipate serious shortage, they couldn't permit the wholesale display of plenty and luxury in food which still goes on. The casualties are fairly shattering—and apparently those amazing Germans have once more got the situation in hand. They are an amazing crew. How grim it is to think of all that competence and steadfastness devoted to the most hideous ideals. I'm sending you the Charles Lister book. To me it is extraordinarily interesting, as I have always had an enormous admiration for those people—Lister, Ronny Knox, &c. What appeals to me so strongly is the spectacle of brilliant civilians like Shaw-Stewart and the like loathing the whole thing—as who cannot who thinks?—and yet carrying it through, and Lister's cheerfulness—and in that bloody Gallipoli, which to my mind always sounded worse for concentrated discomfort and horrors than France—except the France of 1914–1915 winter—which nothing has ever surpassed.

“B.E.F., 13th May.

“A perfect day—beginning with an excellent bathe before breakfast with Oliver, and ending

with an uproarious dinner, at which the Major-General attended as the chief guest of the evening. A really good repast. The 2nd Battalion Sports were, as usual, admirably run—as is everything connected with that really great community. Norman O.E., and Jack in great form; and a fine galaxy of Red Hats—Pulteney, G.O.C. III. Corps, Copper Seymour, the Brigadier, the Major-General, and dozens of Staff Officers. I lunched excellently with their left-half mess. Frightfully hot, but one never ceased drinking.

“Albert (Belges) appears on Tuesday. What a day that ought to be. Quite a pleasant ride to-day over to the 1st Battalion—from there we—Hugh Ross, Cecil Trafford, and I—were fetched by the 2nd Battalion car.”

“B.E.F., 17th May 1917.

“We are back again in a proper unbroken village once more, and after a certain amount of parleying with the Town Major, who was fortunately an ensign, and so amenable to bullying, I succeeded in getting quite a decent billet: small but clean. I am amassing a most amazing amount of kit, which it would be impossible to carry about, except on the transport, which is never far to seek when a Headquarters call. Last night I had a delightful dinner at XV. Corps Headquarters. Though about twelve miles away, Victor<sup>1</sup> came over in a car and drove me back. General J. du Cane has got a French chef, *civile* who, being incapacitated by bad health from serving his own country in the field, thought the best thing he could do would be to serve in the kitchen of an Allies' Corps Commander. The

<sup>1</sup> His friend Victor Gordon-Lennox, Grenadier Guards, wounded, and temporarily A.D.C. to Sir John du Cane.

result was marvellous. Quite a short dinner. There was quite a large party, so Victor and I talked intimately and incessantly without interruption. He has got another month or two there—and then will return to the 1/G.G., I suppose.

“A delightful day to-day. Old ‘Damp’ (Turnbull) marched the Headquarters over here. The Brigadier went in a car, Oliver went on ahead, so Budget and I rode over together. Great fun, as the country—being that which lay just behind the 1st of July ‘No Man’s Land,’ and so quite unspoilt—admits of very considerable galloping.

“I enclose a grisly ‘snap’ (ugh!), eloquent of the reigning depression. The 1st Battalion and the Grenadiers are in the village with us, so we shall have quite a good time. Ralph went on leave to-day—out since 23rd September 1916 without any leave at all—so you see there are lots of people as badly off as me, or worse.”

## II. THE SALIENT.

Immediately after this he came home on leave, and on his return on 1st June he found the Brigade apparently at Wardrecques *en route* for Ypres. No doubt it took him a few days to get into the routine of his work again—if such a word can fittingly be used—but probably his friends would have hesitated to accept literally his own statement that at one time “the only work to be done consists of a list of the old Etonians in the Brigade with their various destinations which the Brigadier wants done for some reason or other.” One can depict the kind General setting



him this "pœna" to keep him out of mischief, and one can figure moreover the neatness and completeness of detail with which this task would be accomplished.

"B.E.F., 9th June.

"I still do nothing, which is demoralising—but pleasant. I tried to read 'Waverley' to-day, but it was too hot. I think W. is rather moderate compared to some.

"We had a delightful Etonian dinner-party last night. J. Holmesdale and Ralph came, and the Brigadier was superb. Never have I met a better raconteur. His stories of Old Eton, 1880–1885, are perfect. Yet the same period in the hands of another might be a nightmare of tedium. It's certainly the individual touch in these things.

"My tent—in which I reign alone—is extremely comfortable. Ralph tells me that his people are sleeping two, three, four officers in one tent. I feel guilty, but like the man in 'Arcadian Adventures' do not mind moral torment, and so remain in solitary state. We have got some ice in the neighbouring burgh, which will make life better. R. and I are going there to-morrow to dine. We talk pure Eton the whole time. Most of the Etonians here, John Dyer, Budget, &c., all left too young to know of its true greatness—which was like nothing else on earth.

"Some one else seems to have taken the Messines Ridge, thus relieving us of an unpleasant task."

In the middle of June the Brigade (so we subsequently learnt) arrived at Poperinghe, and Headquarters were established in the Chateau of



Elverdinghe, the ultimate fate of which Henry subsequently described.<sup>1</sup> A great loss to the Brigade Staff at this time was Sir John Dyer, who "departed to the Division to take up the top Q job there. Of course a good job for him, but it is a sad blow." News of Henry it was difficult to obtain, the most strenuous orders having been just issued forbidding mention of anything connected with the War, however remotely. This no doubt was all quite right, but there were other ways of telling about the War than through letters, and who shall say how much substance there was in the following somewhat malicious suggestions? "X. got a letter from his mother yesterday in which she said, 'I hear,' &c., and then followed our prospective plans. Of course the people who really talk are all these Generals—generally rather elderly, but tremendously anxious to make a hit with 'the girls.' Their one chance of doing so is to gratify the curiosity of these sirens—as they can't appeal by reason of good looks or wit. Hence everything gets out."

Reading and writing continued to occupy his spare time. He was always a facile rhymer,

<sup>1</sup> "3rd February 1918.

"Dear old Elverdinghe Chateau has been burnt down, owing to the carelessness of some servant with a primus stove. I think it is one of the most heartrending things of the war! To have withstood the shells of the Salient for three years, then, when the Boche guns had at last been pushed back, to be burnt down as a Divisional Headquarters. *Eheu fugaces . . .*"

and as was seen in a previous letter, he was constantly in request for contributions to the 'Daily Dump.' About this time another copy of this periodical reached us, consisting solely of a poem by him, which shows how the mud of the previous winter and the futility of the halfpenny Press have eaten into his soul. The paper is typewritten, and reads as follows :—

" THE DAILY DUMP.

12th June 1917.

No. 97, Vol. 2.

TOMMY LOVES THE TRENCHES.

—*Any Newspaper.*

" Before the war I used to be

A shop-assistant down in Streatham.

The life was good to such as me

Those days ! How could I e'er forget 'em ?

A bun and glass of lemonade,

Shared in an arbour in the Park

With some ecstatic nurs'rymaid

Was just about my mark.

But (judging from the Pressmen's chat)

I've lost all taste for things like that.

For dirt and danger now I love

—The former wins the higher grade—

Patrolling ranks most things above,

Or better still, a cheery raid.

Fatigues are not without a thrill—

I'd go route-marching till I drop—

Or bayonet-fight till Doomsday—still

The best of all's a ' pop.'

My bosom swells with martial glee

When told that zero is at three.

I'm happy as the day is long—  
 My life is one huge holiday—  
 With joy and jollity and song  
 We 'Tommies' pass the time away.  
 Inured alike to cold and damp,  
 When rain pours down and tempests blow,  
 And devastate our humble camp,  
 Does that depress us? No!  
 We revel with the best 'aplomb'  
 In 'merry mud-larks on the Somme' . . .

O Correspondent, in your car,  
 Try to refrain from cheap heroics.  
 Describe men as they really are,  
 And not as lunatics or Stoics.  
 The soldier—once, civilian,  
 Little he recked of change and chances—  
 Now finds himself a fighting man  
 By force of circumstances:  
 He does the job just as he strikes it—  
 But not because he really likes it."

About this time, too, there were appearing in consecutive numbers of 'The Graphic' (including the Summer Number of 16th June) the series of drawings with concomitant verse which comprised the *œuvre* with which Colonel Greer and he had beguiled themselves during those tedious winter days. Colonel Greer must have had great talent as a black-and-white draughtsman, and the wealth of detail in his fantastic conceptions of "War as it Isn't," "The Light Side of the War," and "Staff Officers not attached to G.H.Q." is prodigious. But, truth to tell, the drawings are almost too fantastic to be wholly effective, and at all events they must have

afforded little inspiration to the person told off to write topical rhymes explanatory thereof. Such a trifle, however, was not likely to disconcert Henry, and it may be said that he made a respectable tale of bricks with a modicum of straw. One full-page drawing depicts troops in the uniform of the age of Fontenoy, and Highlanders in that of no age at all, with Cavalry on Syro-Phœnician horses, and two venerable Generals accompanying them, one in a pony-chair with an A.D.C. in attendance carrying a bottle of liniment, while the other is propelled in a bath-chair with a nurse behind him, and a servant in front carrying a tray containing a decanter and a wine-glass. Henry with his letterpress contrives to give a touch of greater reality to the whole, as follows :—

“ THE WAR AS IT ISN’T.

“ Some folk maintain, with strange insistence,  
That warfare is a drab existence ;  
That all its panoply and show  
Lie buried in the long ago ;  
In fact, that things like ‘ dash ’ and ‘ flair ’  
‘ Sont magnifiques, mais pas la guerre ! ’  
That is the curious mistake  
Which lots of people seem to make.

Now we have seen the war, and know  
Precisely how things ought to go  
(At Abbeville we are R.T.O.) ;  
So on these pictures cast your eye,  
Where we have done our best to try  
And give the atmosphere of France  
In tableaux from the Great Advance.



Observe our troops in echelon,  
Debouching upon Guillemont,  
In pipe-clayed uniforms arrayed :  
To quote the Press—‘ as on parade.’  
They face the Boche artillery,  
Their hearts on fire with martial glee,  
And never let the most depressing  
Machine-gun fire derange their dressing.

Marching behind the vanguard, see  
Our valiant heavy cavalry,  
Who deign in battle, now and then,  
To frolic with their fellow-men,  
And even, if the weather’s fine,  
Take over trenches in the line—  
An act of kindly grace whose weight  
One cannot over-estimate.

Two Generals are of the party,  
Old warriors now, but hale and hearty :  
Sir Phutyle Fake, the elder one,  
Contemp’rary of Wellington,  
Has never yet been known to fear a  
Shell, and served at Albuera.  
His friend, Sir Boanerges Blades,  
A specialist in hand-grenades,  
Picked up a lot of useful tips  
Which fell from great St Arnaud’s lips,  
The leader in the Crimean War,  
Fought out in 1854.”

This may be taken as a fair sample of the series which extended into August when the artist had already given up his life.

From his letters of this period we hear much of Henry’s social life but little of his work, which he never cared to speak about except in association with his men. One might have supposed

that his Intelligence job was as barren of opportunity as he himself had foreseen it, but that this was not the case is plain from Captain Lyttelton's narrative of life at Brigade Headquarters, which is contained in a later chapter.

"B.E.F., 21st July.

"Every one rather reeling over the blow that has befallen the unfortunate 1st Battalion Coldstream—whose Commanding Officer, Byng Hopwood, and Second in Command were both killed yesterday by a shell. That's the fourth Colonel that Battalion have had killed during the War. However, everything just goes on.

"I dined with the 1st Battalion of the Grenadiers two nights ago, and afterwards went on to the Battalion, where I found Ivan and the rest. As soon as things have settled down I shall try to go back to the Battalion again—in what capacity I don't care. I have had five pleasant but idle months here, though doubtless existence in the Battalion would be even more idle. None the less I could laze with a clear conscience—which I can't do here. One always feels an *embusqué* on any Headquarters unless you have enough work to do—which I haven't. Oliver and I share an elephant-hut (corrugated iron semicircle) in a 'wee housie,' heavily reinforced with concrete bags and sandbags and every other sort of thing. Also every nook and cranny covered with a gas-blanket to guard against an enemy even more potent and far more insidious than mere shelling.

"We really have got a most excellent collection here now. The Brigadier, Budget, Oliver, Damp,

Eric. Not a single person who isn't magnificent. Great fun, I must say. We are all in rasping cue, having just come out of the line for a space. 'Ma' Jeffreys with his Brigade relieved us, and was as great as ever. We did not escape without having to sing several songs—Oliver and self. We are, of course, the H.Q. performers whom the Brigadier always trots out. Rather good form to-night. Loads of Love.

H.

And remember the song, 'There's a piper playing in the Mornin'' (H. Lauder): the last two lines of the chorus sum up my situation—

'So don't sigh, dear,  
I'm a' richt here,  
It's just like bein' at hame.'

(Perhaps not quite as good.)''

No doubt, however, he had in his mind when writing this the vision of the then impending attack on the Pilkem Ridge north of Ypres, though the only indication of any movement was contained in the following lines written to us two days before a battle which was to affect him more seriously than any experience he had hitherto undergone:—

"We leave our pleasant little shack this afternoon for a more arduous sphere, where the opportunities of writing may be rather more restricted. However, I'll see what can be done. I dined last night with Eric Greer: John Dyer was there too—in very good form. Eric, however, is too

recently married to give the War many marks. In which he is not alone.

“Two nights ago I dined with Ivan. We discussed various items of Battalion shop—when—and if—I could return as a Company Commander. Colonel Romilly has practically promised me the next one going. We should have the most awful fun, and of course it would be golden—to use the soul phrase—compared to my present A.D.C.’s existence, which is now entirely past the palling stage. I shall rush back as soon as opportunity and advancement offer.”

“1st August 1917.

“Well, well—our attack is over. ‘Z’ day is an unpleasant memory, and we have come out for a brief respite. A good day, very—that is, the thing was very successful—and the Divisional casualties, on the whole, light; but the 2nd Brigade got it much worse than the 3rd Brigade, and the 1st Battalion suffered worst of all. 320 casualties out of about 470 who went in. Lloyd and Mahomed were killed—the latter a very heavy loss—and poor old Duddy Hope got shot through the eyes, and it is doubtful if he’ll live. Ivan hit—quite slightly, thank Heaven!—also Finnis (aged 44), Edwards, Cooper, and Johns. Outside the Battalion two great tragedies obscure everything else. Eric Greer was killed by a shell at the mouth of his dug-out, and worst of all, John (Dyer) was killed by a chance shell, and several miles behind the line. Perfectly awful. If ever a person deserved all that life can give it was John—the sweetest nature that any man ever had, he hadn’t a single enemy in the world. He and Eric are irreplaceable. What a game: and then Fate allows positively unpleasant



people to survive, and takes two like that, which of course all goes to confirm the idea that it is infinitely better to be done in—which takes a certain amount of acceptance. Romilly got a crump on the head—a dug-out fell on him—three days before the biff, so old Hugh commanded and did excellently. He is applying for me to go back, thank goodness!—probably to command Left Flank. Never have I felt such a worm—there is no other word—as I sat at the bottom of a dug-out at zero . . . and doing absolutely *nil*, with the result that I only got round the line after great strugglings and argument. A very poor game, really; and, thank Heaven! I am going back to keep Ivan's<sup>1</sup> Company warm for him, and then to help him run it when he comes back—that is my ambition now. He is all right, but his jaw was broken—some teeth knocked out. Rather foul—poor Ivan.

“The weather, as usual, has entirely ruined any chance we might have had of following the thing up. It poured all the morning of the 29th, so everything started pretty wet, and then to-day it has simply come down in buckets the whole day. Rather a pity.”

His wish was shortly to be gratified, and in a very few days he was back with his Battalion and in command of the Company (Left Flank), which was to be his, with short intervals, till the end of his life.

The sequence of letters is here broken, and there follows a chapter by Captain Oliver Lyttelton,

<sup>1</sup> Captain Ivan Cobbold, a friend of Eton days.

D.S.O., M.C., who throughout the War had a distinguished record both as a Regimental and as a Staff Officer. He was, as has been seen, closely associated with Henry, who valued his friendship both during and subsequent to the period of service at Brigade Headquarters.

## CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND  
ELSEWHERE IN FRANCE.

BY CAPTAIN OLIVER LYTTTELTON, D.S.O., M.C.

## I.

THOSE who have died in the fulness of their years, who have written pages in the history of their countries, and whose failures and successes have earned that publicity which we call greatness, leave behind them material for the biographer by which he may refashion their personalities and make them live again to his readers. He may apply the touchstone of their actions to his presentment of their character, and may check his own appreciation of their defects and qualities by the actual stress to which his records show that they have been subjected.

But when the task is to portray part of the life of one whose flame has been suddenly and prematurely extinguished, and whose personality found its expression, though in action, yet in action common to that of many others whose part must be left unrecorded, his historian is

helped by little except his own memory, and it is left to his own discernment to fix on those things that were essential and those that were due, as in this case, to the ephemeral reactions and exuberances of youth.

A bullet fired from a rifle at the beginning of its course sways and rocks from its true line by the mere force of that power which has sent it on its way. It does not "settle down" until it has travelled some distance.

It was so with Henry Dundas: his character and conduct, his thought and speech were all extravagantly expressed, and though he was aligned on ideals and aims from which he never really deviated, the very force of his progress towards them often resulted in words and actions which, though not alien, were not yet kindred to him, and which were occasional and transient rather than customary or permanent.

So much by way of preface before I try to give some slight impression of my friend as I knew him.

I first met Henry Dundas on the 27th of September 1916. The 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards, of which I was Adjutant, had to relieve the 1st Battalion Scots Guards on that night in a position which had just been taken, round the farther edge of the village of Lesbœufs.<sup>1</sup>

The Headquarters of the Scots Guards were

<sup>1</sup> Three miles S.W. of Bapaume.



installed 800 yards behind the front line on the forward slope of the Flers ridge, the dominating feature of the Somme battlefield.

As we moved down to relieve, behind us we could see the rim of the ridge stretching out of our sight, sharply outlined even in the darkness.

We reached the "dug-out" so called, and found it to consist of a narrow trench roofed in by a sheet of corrugated iron which, as the expression went, "would not have kept out a whisper."

After we had exchanged the usual good evenings, the Colonel of the Scots Guards introduced me to his acting-Adjutant. "This is Henry Dundas," he said.<sup>1</sup> I saw before me a boy of medium height, with the square shoulders of the Scotchman: a face of character with a slightly tilted nose, a face which might be described as legal and like the prints of Scotch jurists, but at the same time lit with an expression for which I can think of no better word than "gamin."

We proceeded to our business. I found out from him the usual dreary details—position of Companies, of stores, of grenades, S.A.A., asked about water and rations, how far mules could be led, and what route ration-parties followed.

"What about movement in the day? What do they see?" say I.

"Oh, all this is commanded by this ridge"—

<sup>1</sup> He was aged nineteen.

pointing it out on the map—"above Le Transloy ; you saw that this morning. They don't seem to be moving about on it much, but you may bet your shirt that their Artillery observers are there."

"Good. Can one move down the slope oneself in daylight ? "

"Yes, oh yes. Of course you are seen, but they don't worry about one or two : I shouldn't take up a party. I have been twice to-day, once after 'stand-to-arms' <sup>1</sup> and once this afternoon. I go over the top to here, then get into this old trench, about a hundred yards from the support Companies."

"What are the shelled areas ? First of all, what do they always shell ? "

He smiled. "Lesbœufs is not a health resort. They come down for a quarter of an hour round the church at least three or four times a day—5·9's chiefly : otherwise they shell the eastern outskirts continuously, and occasionally 'shoot up' various areas on this ridge with 'whizz-bangs.' <sup>2</sup> They haven't disliked this place very much yet, although they put a stray one very near the cook-house about 7.30 this morning, which put the wind up us a bit."

All this time the two commanding officers, both talking "shop" of this kind, and our two

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, just after dawn.

<sup>2</sup> The 77 mm. shell of the German field-guns.

selves, had been sitting knee to knee in the trench with the candle guttering in yesterday's port bottle, and with that peculiar smell of india-rubber which was the principal property of the ground-sheet, pervading everything. Our boots and our heads were smoking, for it had been a damp evening, and so, to get some fresh air, we went outside, when we had finished our work with the maps.

Henry immediately plunged into a discussion on the greater game. The offensive of the Somme was a failure, he said; the higher command was unimaginative, inelastic, inefficient; nothing had been achieved—a few miles of wasted country in which we could not live had been won. “That country!” he exclaimed expressively, pointing backwards towards the Guinchy valley—“that abomination of desolation!”

And it must be confessed that the valley churned into a rough sea of shell-holes, scattered with graves and bodies, old wire and rifles, and into which, and from which, the shells never ceased to come and go, was more eloquent of human suffering than any other place, except perhaps Ypres, that we ever saw. He looked surprised when I mildly put the more orthodox view. “The object of war is the defeat of the enemies' forces—the old truism. The German Army has been put through the mill, and the memory of this battlefield will be in the

mind of every German soldier when he hears the roar of the opening barrage. Perhaps this isn't a very artistic offensive, because there is hardly any element of surprise. But you want a higher state of training than most of the troops possess to fight that sort of battle. The inelastic plan is the child of inelastic troops. I agree, reserves are not thrown in quick enough, but I believe the real answer is that there are none. Still, the great thing is that our objective is Boches, not Bapaume."

"Well, I don't agree," he said vehemently. "If the troops are not trained enough, for God's sake don't allow these shambles. We are exhausting the enemy—granted—but we are also exhausting ourselves. War is a game of coups; it is not like billiards, a game of long breaks. Our theory is bad, and I believe far behind our practice. Never exploit failure, only exploit success. We exploit either, generally the former."

I give the substance of this conversation because a bitter criticism of the higher command was one of his hobbies, and although I have not set them down because they would not be generally understood, he enriched this argument with many technical illustrations: he showed, at any rate, that he had been very quick in assimilating the salient factors of positional warfare. It is not every subaltern who sees beyond the end of his platoon.



Never, too, was any one who expounded his arguments with greater rapidity and force than Henry. You could not quite believe in his counsels when they were counsels of prudence, because that explanatory finger which wagged at you, all the metaphors which came pouring out, the humour and laughter with which the most pessimistic presages and disillusioned summaries were enounced, showed the vigour of one who was enterprising first and reflective only about the past.

We finished our conversation with the usual Etonian gossip: soon afterwards the reports came down that the relief was complete, and the Scots Guards marched away.

## II.

The winter following the battle of the Somme was wet; the country in which we lived had been changed during the four months of bombardment and counter-bombardment into a treeless, houseless waste: if you stood on a hill and surveyed the scene of the old battles you saw a rough sea of shell-holes with a few tumble-down trenches wavering across it like breakwaters. The rain swept over it continuously, undermined our parapets, penetrated our shelters, and brought the corpses to the surface.

It was impossible to keep troops in the line

for long if they were not to suffer from "trench feet." Further, in order that they might get some rest and shelter, it was necessary to withdraw them a long way back from the front areas, because fighting had continued far into the winter, so that no hutted camps had been built near the front line.

Thus the fatigue and discomfort of routine trench life—peace soldiering, as it was called—were enormously increased. The march from the front trenches to the so-called rest billets was often ten to twelve miles, and it imposed a great strain on men who had been subjected to sleepless exposure in the rain and bad weather.

In our case, the rest billets were big French huts built by the side of the Mericourt road, and not very far from the ruins of that village.

It was, of course, impossible to move from one hut to another except on duck-board walks owing to the mud; it was difficult to keep warm owing to shortage of fuel; and the wind blew through the camps all the winter with a penetrating persistence which found all the cracks in the walls of the huts, and sent gusts of smoke from the field-kitchens swirling and eddying among the cursing inhabitants.

In this paradise we remained thirty-six to forty hours out of every six days, spending the time in drying our clothing and scraping off the mud. Then we boarded some railway trucks, detrained

at Trônes Wood, and marched into our "support billets," north of Combles, in a sylvan resort known as Lousy Wood.<sup>1</sup> Here our quarters were elephant-shelters and one or two dug-outs in the side of the Combles road.

As a rest cure they could not be entirely recommended, as they were almost as little shelter against the elements as they were against the frequent bombardments to which the area was treated.

This was the life of the Guards Division during November and December, and all other Divisions in the Somme Sector were undergoing the same hardships. Perhaps from this slight sketch some new significance may attach to those words which form part of so many obituary notices. "He was always cheerful." High spirits, such as Henry Dundas exhibited, not only gave evidence of a temperament which could not be depressed even when highly tried by discomfort, but also were of the greatest value to his friends and to his Battalion.

It is, of course, during a time of monotony that versatility is most prized, and when existence is dragged out in a country of the dead that vitality is most to be commended. These qualities were his signal endowment, and it is not surprising that during this winter he gained the affection of every one—an affection which

<sup>1</sup> Leuze Wood.

admitted him into the confidences of his contemporaries, whilst it gave him a licence to criticise and even to ridicule his seniors unrebuked.

At the beginning of January we had five days' rest at Corbie, after which we went once more into the line just west of St Pierre Vaast Wood; and though I had seen little of Henry Dundas during the first part of the period described above, in the new sector I left my Battalion to become Staff Captain under instruction, and consequently began to see and hear more of other battalions and their officers.

There is one typical incident connected with Henry Dundas which, though he describes it in his letters, ought to be more fully recorded.

There had been a sharp frost, and the thaw which followed made all the trenches fall in, blocked any communication trenches which may have existed, and made it only possible to move into the front line or from one post to another "over the top."

The motto of our predecessors in the sector had been "*Nous ne faisons pas la petite guerre,*" and the result was that neither side fired at one another during reliefs or at night. Water parties, ration parties, and relieving troops had all to move about above ground, and they did so unmolested. We allowed this state of affairs to go on as long as it was convenient to us, or, in



fact, until we had completed all the essential work on our trenches, and it was then very properly decreed that it must stop. At the same time we did not relish the idea of shooting down the unsuspecting Germans during this implied truce.

Accordingly, two officers volunteered to break the sad news to the enemy that he would get no more sympathy. These two were "Deacon" Brodie (Henry's nickname), chosen by the Brigadier because he knew German, and Henry Dundas, chosen by himself because he knew "Deacon" Brodie and would not miss a chance of an adventure in his company.

This is how he himself describes it in a letter :—

*"21st January 1917.*

"Out of the line once more after an amusing sojourn, which included a visit to the Germans. On the Brigade frontage the line was very close on the right. Up till two days ago a reign of absolute quiet had prevailed. Perfect peace. Every one walked about on both sides. There are no trenches: merely a series of 'islands,' and no communication trenches. The other side are in a similar position, except that their islands are on the top of a ridge and we can't see anything behind. They, of course, can sweep all our islands and the approaches to them, so quiet was essential if any work was to be done, or indeed if any existence was to be continued. So peace reigned. People waved bottles at each other

across No Man's Land—wha' a bond is Johnny Dewar even between enemies—and life was very pleasant. We used to walk round inspecting the islands on the top all the time with the German thirty yards away.

“But gradually the Divisional Staff decided that this state of affairs must cease. This being so, the Brigadier decided that the Germans must be warned. Accordingly Brodie and I, about seven in the morning, sallied out of our posts across the Boches' lines. Brodie is an excellent German scholar, so we were well equipped—he with speech and I with papers inscribed with a message to the effect that ‘after dawn on the 19th all Germans exposing themselves would be shot’ (printed in English usefully enough). We stayed on their wire shouting for an ‘Offizier.’ At last, after much excitement, a small man looking like Charlie Chaplin appeared, with whom Brodie chatted for about twenty minutes, saying how sorry we were that this state of affairs must cease—telling them that all would be well if there were only head-keeping-down by both sides. And so away—not unamusing.”

Perhaps it might be remarked that walking into No Man's Land and parleying with the Boches is not without risk, and that the best intentions are sometimes misunderstood.

### III.

In February 1917 Henry Dundas joined the 2nd Guards Brigade Headquarters as Bombing

and Intelligence Officer. The Staff at that time was composed as follows :—

Commander—Brig.-General Lord Henry Seymour, D.S.O.

Brigade Major—Capt. E. W. M. Grigg, M.C.

Staff Captain—Capt. Sir John Dyer, Bart., M.C.

Staff Captain under instruction—the writer.

The duties of Bombing and Intelligence Officer, as the name of the appointment implies, consisted in instructing a series of classes in bombing and in the tactics of grenade warfare when the Brigade was out of the line, and when it was in the line, in supervising the stores of bombs of all kinds and in co-ordinating the Intelligence reports of Battalions and of the Brigade observers. It was not in itself a particularly arduous or difficult position, but the officer chosen to fill it was carefully selected, and it was thought to be the first step to Staff employment in the future.

Of course, almost any audacious enterprise can be excused on the plea of “reconnaissance or intelligence,” and we were always obliged to keep an eye on Henry to prevent him from walking down the enemies’ wire at night, looking nominally for information but in reality for adventure—and trouble, as the phrase goes.

I can think of two instances in particular when

we were not successful in restraining him, and perhaps they may be written down here out of their chronological order.

The first took place in the Ypres salient, when Henry was detailed to prepare a daily report on the enemies' wire and on the progress which had been made by the Artillery in cutting it.

At the time, we were preparing for an attack : the enemy was fully alive to our intentions, and was very sensitive when he noticed that our Artillery was beginning to cut his wire. Both sides had concentrated a large force of Artillery, and the sector had, as we used to say, thoroughly woken up. Every one had his ears pricked for shells, and not often in vain : Boesinghe village was perhaps the most unhealthy part of our small piece of the line, as it was shelled steadily all day and night, and violently for half an hour or so from time to time. Further, every yard of country was overlooked, and the slightest movement across the top of the ground was seen, and generally provoked coveys of "whizz-bangs." Now just south of Boesinghe ran a railway embankment, twenty to thirty feet high, which in that flat country was a conspicuous "feature." On the line two or three derelict trucks had survived all bombardments. They must needs seem to Henry ideally suited as an observation-post from which to get a look at the wire.

It was perhaps unfortunate that to reach them



involved leaving our trenches at a point within rifle-fire of the enemy, and that clambering up the embankment in full view might attract attention. However, the first time that he thought of them as useful, he walked out of the trench with a map and a pair of glasses, climbed into the second or third truck, and proceeded to have a good look. He remained there all one hot afternoon, and by some fortune, although there was a great deal of shelling, he had a "very quiet time."

On this occasion at any rate he could plead that the risks he took were in a good cause. The other incident could not be so easily justified.

A canal separated the two lines, and in order to test the practicability of the mats by which the assaulting troops were to cross it on the day of the attack, and to secure an identification of the German units opposed to us, the 1st Battalion Scots Guards was ordered to make a night raid.

Henry was sent up to Battalion Headquarters in Boesinghe to await the arrival of prisoners, and to keep Brigade Headquarters posted as to any unexpected developments.

The raid successfully crossed the canal, but no prisoners were captured, as the enemy, suspecting our intentions, had evacuated that piece of trench. We heard nothing from the Intelligence Officer while the preliminary bombardment was in progress, although the telephone line remained

intact. This was not entirely unexpected, but when we knew that the raid had started and indeed could see the enemy Very lights going up, and hear one or two machine-guns in action, we hoped for some word. However, by this time all the lines had been cut, and so we had to be patient until they were repaired. The signallers soon reported that communication was again established, but no word came from Henry. Battalion Headquarters could only say that he had gone out to watch the raid. Four hours after zero, when we had received full accounts from the Battalion, there was still no news from Henry. We were anxious. At 3.30 A.M. he arrived at Brigade Headquarters covered with mud.

“He had thought it advisable to get up close to the raiding party in order to see what was going on. He had really quite intended to do what he was told, but to cut a long story short he had crossed the canal with the party, and had spent half the evening in the German lines. After it was over Ivan Cobbold had offered him food; he never suspected that we would miss him; he was very sorry,” but—at this point he was told to stop—received a severe damning, and was sent to bed in disgrace.

When he had left, the Brigade Major looked at me, shrugged his shoulders, and sadly smiled.

## IV.

During the early part of March 1917 the Germans began their retreat towards the famous Hindenburg Line. We had known almost to a day when the movement was likely to begin, and the Higher Command had declared that our policy was to press closely upon the heels of the enemy and harass him as much as possible without becoming committed to a serious battle.

The troops of the Guards Division were the first to enter the enemies' trenches on the St Pierre Vaast front, and for two days quite severe fighting ensued, as the Germans heavily shelled our front from long ranges, and frequently would not evacuate positions until they were outflanked or actually attacked. After these two days, however, the enemy resistance began to slacken, and we started to advance rapidly.

The change from the old trench life was most exhilarating. The winter had been severe; the monotony of our life had only been equalled by its discomfort; for four and a half months without relief we had gone backwards and forwards into the same or nearly the same sector; we knew every inch of mud in the place, and we had unpleasant reminiscences of every cross-road. Suddenly all was changed. The first signs of spring began to show; monotony was succeeded by movement; we advanced, new pieces

of country came into view, new interests began to be aroused.

Woods with real trees—whole fields without a shell-hole—old German battery positions—German cemeteries: the sight of our line from their point of view—riding a horse up to the support line—villages being captured—bridges being made where the enemy had blown them up—cavalry patrols moving forward,—all this was glorious adventure, and a new life for the web-footed trench-dwellers of the winter.

After a few days of the pursuit we were relieved by another Division; and though we had undoubtedly earned our rest, at the time we were almost disappointed.

Our first rest billets were huts in Billon Wood, and our arrival there proved to be the beginning of the most enjoyable month that we ever spent in France.

At this time General John Ponsonby returned to his old Brigade after sick-leave in England, and our previous Commander, Lord Henry Seymour, was transferred to the 3rd Guards Brigade as Brigadier.

The camp which we inhabited was built in the side of a little valley, and Brigade Headquarters consisted of a small group of huts in a quarry. The mess itself was in a shanty covered with tarred felt; the mess furniture was an ordinary kitchen-table and chairs, and a quite extraordinary



stove which gave out dense clouds of smoke and no heat. Our sleeping quarters were in the old dug-outs which were cut in the chalky sides of the hill, and which were warm but infested with rats.

It is midnight; we have been in our new quarters two days; from where I am lying in my "flea-bag" I can see three other bunks each with a candle in a bottle beside it: three heads—those of Jack, Henry, and Damp Turnbull. A few unusually daring rats are being bombarded with boots. Somebody is saying that he thinks a little Paris leave when the chestnuts are coming out in the Bois is the thing for him. There is a gradually diminishing flow of conversation.

The next morning every one is splashing about in canvas baths about eight o'clock. We breakfast, and then spend a morning in toil.

Social life begins at luncheon. We have all started to smoke: in the corner near the famous stove, standing on a chair, is Mike Mitchell, the Veterinary Officer, who has been ordered there by the Brigadier for making disparaging remarks about one of his horses. It might be mentioned that the Brigadier made a habit of inflicting this and similar punishments on any one, whether officer or chaplain, who transgressed against rules which many governesses would have allowed to pass in the breach, and the writer has often

held out his hand to be rapped when pointing out that the Brigadier had not signed his name in the right place on some printed form.

The General would outline the rest of the day's work for his staff.

"Budget Loyd and I," he might say, "are going to the football match; Jack Dyer is confined to barracks to write a sonnet about the cat for the 'Daily Dump'—our newspaper; "Henry will write a leading article on the Signal Company's sports, in which he will be assisted by Damp Turnbull; and the rest of the Staff will order dinner for twelve. Any papers which want signing must be brought to me by 2.30; any one bringing any after 2.30 will 'stand on the chair' for ten minutes after tea."

Perhaps it would be as well to explain who Henry's principal companions and brother officers were at this time. First, the Brigadier who knew every one in the Brigade by his Christian name, and who was always referred to in conversation when he was not there as "General John." It would have been impossible to find an officer more universally and more justly loved by his subordinates. He gained obedience not by authority but by affection; his helmet, his horses, and his pipe were as well known to the last-joined private soldier as to his oldest friends. The steel helmet was believed to

be made of pith, his horses never stood still even on the most important occasion, and his pipe was never alight.

He it was that initiated and kept alive the 'Daily Dump,' which was the newspaper, gazette, and 'Punch' of the Brigade. This journal went out with the orders every evening, and perhaps a number of this date would show its humble scope better than a description.

"No. 52. VOL. 2.

"THE DAILY DUMP.

"Army Commanders, Corps Commanders, Divisional Commanders, and Brigade Commanders are to be seen daily inspecting sites for summer residences. The days of chateaux appear to be no more, and we should not be surprised shortly to hear that some junior officers have called at a wayside Armstrong hut and found the door opened by a Corps Commander.

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"Captain Eric Mackenzie, Scots Guards, relates that on arrival in Paris the wife of a well-known Staff Officer requested him with tears in her eyes to return to the Division as quickly as he could in order that he might take a letter from her to her husband, and that he actually refused to help the lady in distress. We regret to see the decay of the old chivalry.

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"Lieut. H. L. N. Dundas, Scots Guards, Brigade Bombing Officer, carried out some trials

to-day with the new bomb. Every bomb turned out to be a 'dud,' which inspired the onlookers with much confidence.

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"The following is a copy of a letter received from Prince Alexander of Teck by the Army Commander (after an inspection of the 2nd Guards Brigade): . . . 'The King of the Belgians hopes that you will convey his thanks to the G.O.C. XIVth Corps, and his admiration to the Guards' Brigade, the finest troops in any of the theatres of war.'

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"Trench Proverb: Many a muddle means a medal."

The principal Staff Officer—the Brigade Major—was Budget Loyd, and the Staff Captain, Jack Dyer. They were both men of humour, efficiency, and popularity. Loyd was quite imperturbable under all circumstances. Dyer, on the other hand, was sometimes hilarious when the outlook was unpromising. Loyd spoke with a humorous paucity of words, Dyer supplied the ornamentation.

The Signal Officer, Turnbull, christened Damp by the Brigadier, as he was the Deputy Assistant Mess President, was a Watsonian with a strong vein of Scottish humour, to which, after the manner of his countrymen, he added great seriousness on all the technical details of his work.



The most usual guests at luncheon and dinner parties were Colonel Greer, a brilliant and amusing talker, and a great theorist on war, who at the age of twenty-seven was commanding the 2nd Battalion Irish Guards; Alex. Alexander, his second in command, also twenty-seven, the modern d'Artagnan, with twirled moustaches, Russian-like forage-cap, endowed with the perpetual gaiety, bravado, and bravery of the soldier of fortune; the suave and punctilious Eric Mackenzie, friend of every one; "Freddy" Gamble, the bosom companion of Henry Dundas, one of the most charming and certainly the best-looking man that I have ever seen.

Of course there were many others, but these you might have nearly always found at the Brigadier's table.

The conversation and controversy which this company set going often lasted far into the night; perhaps it would begin on some poem by Jack Dyer, which would be torn to pieces by the critics and mended again by its supporters, would range over the whole field of poetry with a crackle of quotations from Jack and Henry and Eric, subside into calm, be set off again by the Brigadier and the port, change to the War, and end in imitations, anecdotes by the General, and the great hilarity of every one.

Nobody enjoyed these times more than Henry. His spirits were amazing, his love of society,

argument, and good fellowship were such that I have often known him ride ten miles out and ten miles back to a dinner-party with his friends. He himself contributed to conversation in meteoric extravagances; and though he criticised without reserve and sometimes without expediency, he excelled in stimulating every one to be amusing.

He knew every song of Harry Lauder, the whole of Gilbert and Sullivan, and frequently preached sermons in Scotch, which were masterpieces both in accent and language. The most elaborate and ridiculous perorations came rolling off his tongue enriched by absurd parables, pointed by the most characteristic quotations, and driven home with the unctuous insistence and bucolic pedantries of the original.

No one could have talked for long to Henry Dundas without hearing of three things—Scotland, Eton, and his great friend Freddy Gamble.

Scotland to him was an enthusiasm — any patriotism he felt was for that country. He was roused to the wildest excitement by the mere sight of a kilt or a piper, and when the kilts marched and the pipes played he became nothing short of a fanatic.

As for Eton, no rival to it ever entered into his ken: he regarded it with a natural unstudied love; his affection for it was filial. "About Scotland and Eton," he once said, "I have no sense of humour."

To his love for his country and for his school was added that for his friend. Their intimacy was so close that it barely escaped sentimentality. He had more friends than most men, and yet beside this one friend all others were as nothing : he would have given anything that he possessed to him ; he would have followed him anywhere. To see them together was to see youth at its best ; and the charm of their presence, the freshness and gaiety of their companionship are beyond my powers of description.

Gamble was killed just before Henry Dundas. The memory of them is the most poignant left to me of all the tragedies of the War.

At the beginning of April the Division was set to work clearing a way for the new railways which had to be built across the evacuated areas. The 2nd Guards Brigade were billeted for this work round the ruined village of Cléry, on the banks of the Somme. Jack Dyer was sent on by the Brigadier to select a site for our Headquarters. He performed his task with the greatest skill, and chose a little island in the middle of the river opposite the village of Ommiécourt-lez-Cléry. At this point the Somme spreads itself out into shallow lagoons : our Headquarters were approached by a damaged causeway, and as you stood looking eastwards you saw the solemn procession of the river on your right swirling past the island, whilst in front of you lay

broad stretches of still water conquered here and there by patches of sedge and rushes. On this romantic site we built ourselves a comfortable hut with a real brick fireplace, and lined it all with green canvas. The weather had turned : the sun came out before his time, warmed our little island, and brought out patches of colour even in the desolation of the mainland.

Having very little work in the afternoon, Henry, Jack, and I used to walk our estate and talk about anything but the War.

We would wax very philosophical in the evening, and having lit some excellent cigars, would sit in canvas chairs and discourse on life and death, argue perpetually about  $\tau\acute{o}$   $\sigma\nu$  and  $\tau\acute{o}$   $\mu\eta$   $\acute{o}\nu$ , think ourselves very clever, and go to bed to dream of some argument to defeat the other fellow.

One of the most frequent and, of course, least conclusive subjects of discussion was the best line or two lines in English poetry. Jack Dyer, I remember, advanced—

“ Moves all the labouring surges of the world,”—

and was heavily attacked by Henry and me.

I believe our last naïf conclusion was—

“ Nights’ candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops,”—

but the subject was dropped because the Brigadier organised his authors’ handicap, in which a repre-



sentative selection of English authors were handicapped as in a horse-race thus :—

Mr Shakespeare's ' Hamlet ' . . . . .	9 st. 7 lbs.
Mr Webster's ' Duchess of Malfi ' . . . . .	9 st. 5 lbs.
Mr Milton's ' Paradise Lost ' . . . . .	9 st. 5 lbs.

And so on.

These handicaps appeared as literary supplements to the ' Daily Dump,' and provoked more controversy than gambling.

We had expected to remain on our island for a month, but after ten days we received an order to move. These orders are always unpopular, but on this occasion they were tragic. We had had a real holiday under delightful conditions : the future was uncertain.

Thus Henry in the current number of the ' Daily Dump ' :—

" LINES IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF G. 867. APRIL 1917.

" Dear Somme, although I must confess that your attractions vary,  
 No critic could, however harsh, deny your charm at Cléry.  
 Here by the margin of your stream we built our little camp,  
 And came one day—the Brigadier, Jack, Oliver, and Damp—  
 To find a river site as fair as e'er was that of Chillon,  
 Where we might rest, our nerves depressed by sylvan gloom at Billon ;  
 Where we might wander on your banks on sunny afternoons,  
 Discoursing vaguely on romance and ' Training of Platoons ' ;

Where as the days grew really hot, we'd emulate Leander,  
Vying in many an early-morn natatory meander.

But ah ! Divisions' stern decrees  
Have shattered all our fantasies,

For we must leave thy banks, O Somme, and take the  
road once more

To all those half-forgotten spots we knew and loathed  
of yore—

Morval, Lesbœufs and Maurepas, Combles and Saillisel,  
Leaving thy joys, my Ommiécourt—from heaven into  
hell.

Fill high the carts with Armstrong huts, with canvas,  
felt, and beds,

Where we were wont of nights to rest our fancy-weaving  
heads.

Our early English mess-room lies dismantled on a lorry,  
Latrines laid low, and cook-house too—sad is our lot and  
sorry.

For us uncouth Le Mesnil waits. Dear River, fare thee  
well,

For years—or can it be for ever ? Not even I can tell  
(Unless, as certain pundits say,  
Your ' Second Battle ' starts in May)."

## V.

After moving from Ommiécourt, the Division, contrary to our expectations, still remained working on the railways, and we established our Headquarters successively at Le Mesnil and Curlu.

The last named was almost as charming a spot as our island, and the weather being hot, Henry and I often swam in the Somme before breakfast, told ourselves that it was Boveney Weir, and to enhance the illusion talked Eton shop,—“ You will be second choice for your sixpenny ”—“ I

hope to be up to Broader next half"—and so on, —on our way back to our Headquarters.

In May 1917 the Division formed part of the General Reserve at the battle of the Messines Ridge, but owing to the immediate success of these operations was not engaged in the fighting.

In June we were once more moved into the Ypres salient, and took up a line along the Boesinghe-Ypres Canal. At the same time we were given orders to prepare to attack the Pilkem Ridge as a first objective, with final objectives Houthoulst Forest and the high ground running north from Passchendael.

It would not perhaps be out of place to enumerate shortly the difficulties which these orders involved.

All lines of approach, whether roads or tracks to the front areas of the Salient, were under direct observation by day: the forward trench system, as well as the ground west of them, was enfiladed. Into a narrow sector it was necessary to concentrate all the vast organisation which is needed for the first blow at an enemy heavily entrenched and protected by a large force of well-placed guns. The concentration of batteries to bombard the hostile lines and to smother his artillery was alone a task of the greatest possible difficulty.

On our particular sector the front lines were separated only by an unfordable canal some

twenty to thirty yards wide; on one bank ran the British, on the other the German, trenches.

This single factor involved two difficulties of great importance: first, it was impossible to bombard the enemy front line whilst we were holding ours; and second, some means of getting the assaulting Infantry over the canal at zero had to be organised. The minor difficulties were that after zero it would become necessary to move guns across the canal to support our farther advance, and for this purpose, as well as for the supply of troops, bridges would have to be constructed immediately after the front lines had been captured.

During our first "tour" of twenty-four days, Brigade Headquarters were established in Elverdinghe Chateau, just a mile west of the front line. We arrived one hot afternoon when everything was peaceful, and although we were sorry to notice two 9·2 and one 60-pounder battery in our garden, were nevertheless well enough pleased with our quarters. The chateau was a strong stone building surrounded by a lake and a small wooded park. From the east windows of our bedrooms we looked straight across some lush fields in which a great profusion of weeds and poppies had sprung up, over to the Pilkem Ridge, which dominated the whole of our positions. Just north of the chateau the Elverdinghe-Boesinghe road ran straight as a die through the lines.



On the evening we arrived we strolled out into the grounds, and Henry Dundas and I played an imaginary game of golf with the utmost solemnity, while Jack Dyer and the Brigadier carried imaginary clubs. One or two shells, however, began to arrive as it was getting dark and drove us indoors. They were the first heralds of the almost continuous shelling which we suffered for two months.

Jack Dyer, Henry Dundas, and I shared a large bedroom on the first floor, and made ourselves reasonably comfortable with the aid of wire bedsteads.

On the other hand, the first floor of the only large building in the neighbourhood, with several batteries in the garden and within a mile of the front line, is not an ideal place in which to sleep.

Night after night we were shelled: on one particular evening the enemy fired 5000 shells into the garden; besides high explosive they also employed a high-velocity naval gun which shot straight over the chateau, and its shells made a noise like an express train passing overhead.

The only one of the party who did not care two straws for the daily and nightly dose was Henry, and this is not said lightly, but most seriously and truthfully.

It is true that he had not had quite so long an experience as some others, but his non-

chalance was remarkable, and he was one of the few whom I saw who did not mind being shot at by anything. I do not mention it as being particularly to his credit, but merely as a fact and a characteristic.

There is one evening about this period which I recall very vividly. Hugh Ross (Scots Guards) was in command of a Company which was quartered in some dug-outs along the garden wall of the chateau. During the whole of one afternoon and early evening this part of the grounds was shelled with great intensity, and several men were buried and had to be dug out, whilst all had narrow escapes. Hugh, at this time, was suffering from fever and strain, and few in his condition would have been still at duty. When the shelling was over he came into Brigade Headquarters covered with brick-dust, exhausted, and nearly "through."

He was asked to dinner. Henry was in particularly good form, and his high spirits were so infectious that by the end of dinner Hugh had recovered. The irrepressible Henry must of course begin Scotch songs, which so inflamed the Caledonian ardour of his brother Scot that they started to dance a reel and give out the chorus with the utmost vigour. Outside the evening shells were homing like wild duck into the ponds and garden of the house, whilst inside Hugh and Henry beat up the singing to

a frenzy, and eventually collapsed perspiring and laughing on the floor. Soon after, Hugh took his leave, and swore it was one of the best evenings he had ever spent.

The Signal Officer, Turnbull, already referred to as Damp, writes: "I could multiply such episodes an hundredfold. Now it is Henry at Zommerbloom Cabaret,<sup>1</sup> striding away up the 'jolly old line' (a phrase quoted from some chaplain), or lying unmoved in his billet whilst the rest of us were seeking shelter from the accursed shells, as on the night when Oliver Lyttelton and Eric Mackenzie performed prodigies of wound-bandaging (fourteen wounded men in the smallest dug-out), or singing with Oliver the famous chant, 'We fought at Mons and at Landrecies' (pronounced Landreeces), or at the instigation of General John, ringing up some Battalion in the guise of a very broad-vowelled Presbyterian chaplain, and arranging special church-parades for the men, or else, again with Oliver as co-partner in wet weather, chanting in ritualistic strains a horrible sentence from a 'Times' leader, which went thus:—

' Never we believe  
Within the memory of man  
Has—the vern-al change  
Been so long  
Or—so persistent-ly withheld.' "

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<sup>1</sup> Another Headquarters in the Salient.



The attack for which we had been preparing took place on 31st July, and was a complete success. We were, however, unable to exploit it, as it began to rain on the first afternoon, and did not cease for a fortnight. It is probable that the rain was brought down by the bombardment, the heaviest that was ever fired during the whole War. On 31st July the 18-pounders alone fired £18,000,000 worth of ammunition, and more than 80,000 tons of shells were discharged at the enemy.

Henry's impetuous and daring nature was chafed by the restrictions which were imposed on him at Brigade Headquarters. He was not allowed to attack with the front-wave; he was not given as much work as he wanted, and he grew more and more impatient with his lot as Intelligence Officer. He longed for men to command, and after three weeks' importunity succeeded in getting back to his Battalion—the 1st Battalion Scots Guards—and was given command of a company.

After this I saw him of course far less often, but enough to know that he had not altered. He was highly successful as a Captain of a Company, and the men who served under him were devoted to him. This is a phrase which has been much used and abused, but it is true in his case. How could it be otherwise? To the enthusiasm and enterprise of youth were added fearless and even reckless courage, and a very real knowledge of and devotion to his profession.



The way in which he led his Company during the offensive of October 1917, his excellent work during the defensive actions of March and April 1918, proved him to be a regimental officer great in practice and in promise.

I cannot write more of him as a soldier from my personal experience. What followed is described in his letters.

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Henry Dundas was killed in September 1918—two years to a day after I first met him.

Into a few short years he had crowded many of the incidents and emotions of a lifetime: he had shown that his spirits and his character were proof against the severest strain to which human beings are subjected; he had excited the admiration and earned the regard of all who knew him. His faults, such as they were, arose from the impetuosity of his temperament and from the audacity of an original and adaptable intellect, but he atoned for them by an innocence and simplicity of character and a steadfastness in practice which were not outshone even by the brilliance of his flashing personality.

If he had lived he would have gone far towards earning the highest honours which a public career can give; that he did not do so is due to the fact that he spent his inheritance of brain

and energy in one burst, and gave his life for those ideals which he acknowledged in everything except in words.

Let us proudly keep for him in our remembrance some of that fame which he would have won: for if his short life has not earned greatness and the distinctions of publicity, it is not for that reason the less worthy of our approbation and emulation.

## CHAPTER VI.

AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1917.

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS,  
8th August.

"ADDRESS changed once more, as you will see. I am going back to-morrow to command a Company—Left Flank to wit,—so unless I am dégommed in the interim I shall be a Captain in a fortnight. I am more pleased than I can say. I have just returned from a pleasant holiday of twenty-four hours in Boulogne. I went with a fellow who is A.D.C. to the G.O.C. of the 'glorious Welsh Division' (*cf.* the Press), and we stayed the night. A bath and a bed are always delightful. We also ate largely. I saw several leave-boats go off with a pang of regret—but with any luck I ought to get back in September or October.

"I am really frightfully pleased about this Company—getting Ivan's is so topping. I shall be able to keep it warm for him till he comes back. I only hope I shan't be inadequate. . . .

"Old Millar was in 'B' Company; you will remember my mentioning him. He is in that photograph of me on the Canal Bank. Nice and Anglo-Indian—and a very stout fellow indeed. He was hit on the 15th. Very charming of Sir

Archie.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact I don't know why there has been all this hold-up of letters—the 31st was the only day I haven't written, barring yesterday. . . .

“The Battalion had a visit from Gough to-day—a great deal of heart displayed, slapping sergeants on the back, &c., but a tremendous man—Army Commander at forty-three.

“It's a queer War. Dunville, that last V.C., was with me at Eton, and did not seem to have the makings of a hero, and now look at what he did, and his death. Superb. Poor little Esmond Elliot was buried to-day. He was wounded three days ago. A sad blow.”

“1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS,  
9th August.

“It is too delightful being back here engaged in reorganising the Company, which emerged with no officers, 1 sergeant, and about 30 men, so all work is still in the embryonic stage. I am going back for a farewell dinner with the Brigade to-night, at which the Major-General and Copper Seymour are being present—a famous occasion.

“It's a great thing really commanding a Company in the Regiment. Imagine the feelings of the old-time soldiers on being told that the ages of the two Left Half Battalion Company Commanders (C. and L. F.) total just over forty. For Pat Bradshaw is about a month younger than me, and Ivan is just a week older. And to think that Ivan and I were thrown out of the E.C.O.T.C. proficiency in 1915 for idleness. Ha! ha! The old Scouts.

“Roger Tempest is, I think, admirable. Of

<sup>1</sup> Sir Archibald Orr-Ewing, one of the kindest of friends, often sent us the latest news from Regimental Headquarters.



course a wonderful soldier: tremendously competent: rather of the stamp of 'Ma' Jeffreys. He is, however, very senior, and I am afraid will go off to command a Brigade quite soon, in which case the command will devolve upon Romer. He has been sent out for that purpose.

"It is really delightful being back with the Battalion. The 'Guid auld Scotland' feeling is really the dominant note in my life, I think.

"I dined last night with Tommy M'Dougal at the 2nd Battalion. Jack Stirling was out with the French, so there was just T., self, Dick Farmer, the Transport Officer, and Walker the doctor. We had a most admirable dinner, and jugs of hock cup, on which we all got very pleasantly convivial, and said 'Old Boy' a good deal, and sang H. Lauder. I eventually returned at midnight on a (fortunately) docile horse, and retired to rest."

During the next few weeks his talk is all of the changes in the Battalion and of the re-organisation of his own Company. The Battalion he describes as containing the nucleus of a very pleasant coterie in his friends—Hugh Ross, Frank Mann, Pat Bradshaw, "Deacon" Brodie, and "little Arthur Kinnaird, a charming man, rather like John Dyer in nature." By the middle of August (or two weeks more than two years since he left Eton) we were told that we might address him as Captain, for the fear that was overshadowing him of a senior officer being sent out from home to take over the Company seemed to have been dissipated.

The one fly in his ointment at the time was that his soldier servant, Witt, had to go down the line with a bad foot, an old injury breaking out again. "The severance of a two years' partnership. I'm taking on Ivan's servant, a charming youth called Macintosh, who was at Corsham with me. He'll do excellently, I expect." And excellently and faithfully he did serve his Captain in the ensuing thirteen months, save during some short intervals when he was detailed for other duty. He was near Henry when he met his death, and it was thanks to his devotion that his body was carried back six miles through the night by German prisoners over rough country to the Battalion Headquarters at Boursies, where he was laid at rest.

His devotion to his officer did not end there, and now that he has returned to civilian life in Edinburgh, where throughout the War his wife maintained his home with his three little boys, it is one of our pleasures to receive periodical visits from him, when we talk of those campaigning days and hear of the traits of character and acts of comradeship and courage which endeared Henry to him and to all the men with whom he came in contact.

"1ST BN. SCOTS GUARDS,  
19th August.

"I am quite comfortable in a 'wee shelter,' and Ivan's servant Macintosh is very good, though

I miss the rubicund countenance of Witt, who has never been far away during the last two years. My new young man is charming—a Wykehamist, and in the Eleven there in 1915 and 1916. Extremely competent, very much on the spot, and very much interested in the whole thing. General John is going to command a Division. I am glad for him: it is splendid.

“Four new officers appear any moment—including Tommy Goff, whom I shall get in Left Flank. It will be nice having some one who was at Eton in those halcyon days.

“After tea Frank and I are going down to see John’s grave—and Eric’s. They are buried almost next each other, in the same cemetery as Byng Hopwood, old ‘Pardon’ (Champion), and too many other gallant men.

“I’ve just got ‘Blackwood.’ The Fitzclarence thing is superb. ‘The auld Jocks,’ Reggie Stracey and sixty-nine men: Wha’s like us? And under Roger Tempest this Battalion will soon be up to its pre-war level of being the best in the Brigade—and therefore in the Army. Of course he may get the Brigade. I wonder. It’ll be interesting to see who it is. Perhaps Julian Steele.

“The average age of the five officers—self, Holmes, Erskine, Macdonald, and Drummond—in the Company is 20·3. Rather good that. Old ‘Sherlock’ Holmes, who was out last year and went home sick about November, is a genial soul, and the other three are charmingly young. Erskine (the Wykehamist) knows all my Horris Hill people, and is extremely good at militarism. Macdonald—a Catholic—was at Beaumont, and remembered me playing there—and Drummond, Harrow. All three terrifically competent and smart and Sand-



hurstian. What they will be like in the line I don't know. I expect quite good.

"We are now safely ensconced in a very nice camp—an ex-French one. The priest went into the local town to-day to hear an address to priests—and much they need it—from whom do you think? Kelman.<sup>1</sup> I sent a message to him through our man telling him to come up and talk to the Battalion. How they'd love it. As it is, services are the grimmest things you can imagine. None of the men attempt to sing. The only time I have heard a hymn well sung was in the mess here last night, when Hugh came in, and we all sang 'For all the Saints' quite magnificently.

"Roger is still crashingly competent. The Brigade all want me to go back there—which I don't in the least want to do so long as I keep my Company, but in the event of being done down I think I should go back. Of course I should rather like to try and get the Adjutancy, which seems to be in rather a fluid state just now, . . . but on the whole I'm rather coming round to the theory that the main object of life out here is to have as good a time as possible. This one couldn't do at the Brigade—with a clear conscience: but here one can amuse oneself trotting about and seeing one's friends with a certainty that no one can imagine one is an *embusqué*—not even oneself (in my case the most stringent judge of all).

"My new Company Sergeant-Major has arrived—yclept Mitchell—and looks very pleasant. It is a great thing getting that settled. To-night I am dining with Alec Robartes and the 3rd G.G."

<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Kelman, D.D., formerly of St George's United Free Church, Edinburgh, now of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York.



*"B.E.F., 31st August.*

"The Colonel (Tempest) is departing to command a Brigade. Very sad, as he is quite admirable, and has done the Battalion a world of good. We did a scheme for him this morning at which he presided and was quite complimentary. Romer now takes command of the Battalion, and Hugh will become second in command.

"I have just come back from a most charming evening in Pop with Ralph, who is leaving the Division and going to the Brigade to do my job—which is delightful.

"A great many changes on the Divisional Staff. The great Guffin Heywood (G.S.O. 1) is going home to be in charge of a Staff Course, I suppose for a month or so, and then comes out as a Brigade Commander, and Sandy Ruthven, V.C., takes his place. Beckwith Smith is now G.S.O. 2, and one Evans is Brigade Major to Jeffreys in the 1st Brigade. But all this is rather shoppy and tiresome.

"I had quite an amusing evening with the Welsh last night. The General (Blackadder) is charming.

"I've got an Iron Cross—a 1914 one—and I think 2nd Class, which I have been offered £20 for. Shall I sell it, or would you like it? The Intelligence Sergeant of the 3/G.G. gave it to me on the 31st.

"A beautiful night to-night, and I think we are in this very pleasant camp for some more days. To-morrow Budget, Oliver, Eric, and Damp all come to dine with Hugh and myself in this mess—hence some of the laddies will have to go out. Perhaps the Brigadier will come as well. I have scored rather a success there, and got my 'Henry'

at the second meeting. One more General added to the bag ! ”

Thus he introduces to us with his accustomed breeziness, and at close range, the distinguished officer whose previous military career he touched on in that uncompleted ‘Chronicle’ already quoted. Had Henry lived and continued his Army career, he would probably have admitted in after years that there was no one who had taught him more in the art of war than General Brooke, and the Brigadier himself was fully alive to the quality of the boy whom he honoured with his regard during those thirteen months that he served under him.<sup>1</sup>

It is permissible, too, to record a letter which at this time gave Henry intense pleasure, though, with characteristic modesty, he used when sending it to us the following words: “I enclose a letter from General John. Rather sweet. Don’t hawk it round, as a good deal of it is rot, especially the third page.”

*“16th August.*

“DEAR HENRY,—Very many thanks for your letter. I was very sorry not to see you before you went off to tell you how well you had done

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after Henry’s death a friend of ours received a letter from her brother, in which the following occurred: “You must have been very sorry at Henry Dundas’s death. He was such a nice boy. I got to know him last summer. Boy Brooke told me he was very exceptional, and he was very sad at his death. He said his death and that of young Gamble were the two greatest losses the Brigade had had. High praise from the Brigadier.”

your work on the Staff, and to thank you for 'playing up so well.'

"I can only say I think you are right to go back, especially when offered the command of a Company. I should have done the same, I am sure, if I had been in your place. Don't go and charge the Boche by yourself or stick your head over the top so that they can get a pot at you. Remember you are a Company Commander, so you are precious. Your reputation for bravery is so high that it will probably lead you astray.

"We are very dull. Oliver away—Eric in hospital, so Budget is a Lord High Everything Else at present. Good luck. Yours,

JOHN PONSONBY."

The month of September found the Battalion temporarily settled in a back area and engaged in training and reorganisation, and to Henry with all the energy of a new broom the work was thoroughly congenial. The beginning of the month saw him once more in Paris for a few days' leave with his friend Alec Robartes. But this time he went with the blessing of his C.O., and everything was quite in order. It happened most fortunately for us that one of our greatest friends, James Rhoades, was in Paris at the time, engaged upon Board of Trade work which necessitated visits to various French ports, and upon him in his lodgings Henry blew in unexpectedly on the day of his arrival. The result was that much of their time was spent together, and a full and particular account of their doings is contained in



the following letter from our friend. It would be difficult to paint a better picture of the boy—his loveliness and light-heartedness, and his power—to which so many of the friends of our own generation have testified—of carrying people away with him into the most absurd and innocent enterprises.

"151 BIS RUE ST JACQUES, PARIS,  
*Tuesday, 5me.*

"MY DEAR CECIL,—Henry is looking perfectly splendid and is in roaring good spirits. He burst in here late last Monday (the 3rd) with loud hechs and a Scottish voice that made the rafters ring! I was absolutely enchanted at the unexpectedness of it all, and he turned my drab existence for a week into a whirl of excitement. I am missing him most horribly now! I only saw him for a few moments on the Monday night, and had to waste the whole of the next day at Havre on business. On Wednesday I called at the Ritz early in the morning and found him in his bedroom writing letters in his pyjamas. . . . I assisted at his toilet—a sort of 'petit lever du roi'—and we sallied forth to lunch at Henri's, where we consumed food for the Gods. In the afternoon we motored to Versailles, where it was so hot that we took off our coats and lay in the grass discussing Edinburgh and roaring with laughter. We dined at Voisins (more glorious food), and then went to the Olympia to a dismally stupid variety show which we enjoyed thoroughly. Everything here ends at eleven o'clock nowadays. I saw him home to his hotel, and got back here just before a terrific thunderstorm burst over Paris. Next morning (Thursday) was dull and rainy,



but it cleared up about three in the afternoon. I insisted on his coming here to lunch and having some plain food! The dear old octogenarian couple *loved* him, and Eton was a great bond of sympathy between them. They have stayed there with the Rawlins' in the old days, and have also had the three Ponsonby brothers as pensionnaires here, so Henry had heaps to say to them, and laid himself out to be quite charming to the dear old lady. Everybody was amazed to meet a Capitaine of twenty years old, and the old lady predicted that he would be a Maréchal at twenty-five like the famous Hoche. We went out after lunch into the Luxembourg Gardens, where Henry seized a racket from a small boy and played ball with a bevy of small children. We had tea chez Colombin in the rue Cambon, and enjoyed watching fat old Frenchwomen guzzling sugary cakes. They all had Music-hall faces, and we christened them with names such as the brothers Egbert, Widow Twanky, &c. Some of them were like Roman Emperors, and were dubbed Galba, Vitellius, &c. We then dined at Voisins again, and went off to the Folies Bergère to another abysmally stupid entertainment, which we again thoroughly enjoyed. There was a fat man on the stage who threw people over his head into a net, and challenged people from the audience to try and resist him for fifteen seconds. A 'Scottie,' a Canadian I fancy, completely baffled him, much to our delight. From there, home to bed. We dined the next night with two other Guardsmen, Robartes and Borthwick, both very nice, and we all went together to the Grand Guignol, a wonderful little place, which I haven't seen for over twenty years, and where they give the most blood-curdling plays. After a spectacle

of the usual sort, alas ! it was a case of the Gare du Nord, and away he went in a vast long train bound for the front.

"Henry has some latent power in him which makes his respectable elderly connections lose their heads entirely, and return to the age of twenty ! I can't tell you how I enjoyed his visit. Hitherto I have never got him alone all to myself. He is a most strikingly attractive person, and there never was any one so absolutely blameless in his life as Henry is. With all his great brain, his *joie de vivre*, his wonderful spirits, he is an absolutely innocent child. He does not smoke, he far prefers orangeade to any form of drink, and he looks with amused horror on the ghastly painted jades who generally weave a spider's web round people of his age. You need never have a second's anxiety about him. His one vice is that he is a corrupter of middle-aged spinsters and schoolmasters ! I am missing him most terribly now. Everything is so dull without him. How we longed for you and Nevill to be there all the time. It was great luck that his visit found me at a time when I had absolutely nothing to do : barring the Tuesday at Havre and a short visit to the Intendance on Thursday, I had nothing to do at all till the Saturday, when I had to go down to Limoges on business. . . .

"I forgot to tell you that Henry stops every baby of good looks, and talks to it, comparing it with the Goo, of course to its utter disadvantage. Now my fond love to all the family.—Yours affly.,  
JIM."

"B.E.F., 22nd September.

"We are now safely ensconced in a camp right behind. Very crowded, however, and the men.

are, I think, thoroughly uncomfortable. We are trying to do something by squashing the officers up more a bit. A lot of cleaning and scrubbing equipment has got to be gone through which they loathe, and everything is being tightened up.

"Great fun really getting the training in hand here. I love training people. Hammerton has arrived, and commands Right Flank, and Dalrymple commands 'B,' so I am no longer junior Company Commander.

"Brooke, the Brigadier, is quite charming, and apparently likes me; anyhow he is always extremely genial when we meet. Curious that I get on so well with the ultra-Grenadier Militarists such as he and George D. Jeffreys. Of course I have become almost Grenadier myself in my devotion to drill smartness and things. Col. Romer is good and charming, and I hope his health will stand it.

"We're playing a football match against the sergeants this afternoon, and in a few days an Eton game, we and the Grenadiers against the Coldstream. Rather fun, though I loathe the game. Loads of love.

H."

"B.E.F., 29th September.

"A wonderful day, and another camp (or rather billet), still farther from the line, combine in bringing over us all a feeling of benevolence and ease which is as delightful as it is uncommon. Added to which, we have got a Company mess—'C' being too far away to have our usual Left Half Battalion coterie—and Ralph is living with us, as the Brigade Bombing ground is next door to the Company billets. We are practising for a Brigade Company drill competition, which is *en*



*train.* What our chances are I don't know—not having seen any one else, let alone the other Battalions. The officers are excellent, as is my Company Sergeant - Major, but the N.C.O.'s moderate—*i.e.*, they can't shout and aren't violent enough. However, that will come. We live in a most delightful atmosphere of social excitement and sport. A platoon football competition is running its belated course. We had a great officers' match against the Coldstream yesterday, which resulted in a draw, 1-1, in spite of the fact that we played half an hour extra time. Nigel was in very good form—a good player. On our march here this morning, to my intense joy I suddenly heard the Lewis-Gun Corporal of the leading platoon humming Gilbert and Sullivan—and the less common bits, such as 'See how the fates,' 'For he is a pirate King,' &c. Wonderful. I must speak with him on the subject. My gramophone ought to arrive any day now, which will add to the joy of life. We have got a really excellent mess now. We can discuss the various questions of discipline when I return on the 11th. Victor Mackenzie leaves England to-day to be second in command."

Henry's leave was due for the middle of October, and our arrangements were made for being in London from about the 10th or the 11th. Only a week or two before he had expressed the opinion that the Division's sojourn in the back area would be of considerable duration, and there was nothing in his letter of 7th October to suggest that any movement was afoot (except in a homeward direction) so far as he himself was concerned.



"7th October.

"The rain pours down, and I'm afraid the summer has gone for this year. We had a most perfect five days' spell—boilingly hot, and no wind or anything—then three days ago it broke completely. However, it's merely a good opportunity for testing all our rain-proof clothing. As far as I can see, I shall get away about the 11th after all—but the best thing to do is to wait till I wire, which I'll do from the boat, explaining time, date of arrival in London. I'll wire to Lenton and Queen Anne's Mansions—a sort of military wire addressed—repeated—&c. I dined with the Brigade two nights ago—a sort of command performance, as now that there is no Oliver (he's home for two months on the Senior Staff Course) they haven't got any stock comedian to keep them going. Boy Brooke is a wonderful man. It gives one such a good feeling to have a man like that running the Brigade. This last biff has been extraordinarily good—i.e., the one on 5th—and now one hears that all the Boches who come across from the Russian front at once mutiny over here, as it's so bloody compared to the ease of the East. Arthur Kinnaird came back off leave yesterday—in rasping cue, as usual."

Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch of a later date narrates that—

"On the 8th October rain continued, and the slippery state of the ground, combined with an exceptionally dark night, made the assembling of our troops a matter of considerable difficulty. No interference, however, was encountered by the enemy's artillery, and at 5.30 on the 9th

October our attack was renewed on a front of over six miles from a point east of Zonnebeke to our junction with the French north-east of Langemarck.

“The greatest depth of our advance was on the left, where the Allied troops penetrated the German position to a distance of nearly one and a half miles. French troops and British Guards crossed the flooded valley of the Brombeek, and making steady progress towards their objectives captured [certain villages], besides woods and a great number of farm-houses and strong points.”

Of the imminence of these operations we at home had of course no inkling, and accordingly when we read in the ‘Times’ of the 10th the account of the successful attack on the Passchendael Ridge on the previous day, in which the Guards had taken part, it seemed incredible to us that the 2nd Brigade at least should have been concerned, and inquiry at the Guards Club and at Wellington Barracks could draw little or no information.

What, then, was our joy and amazement when he burst in upon us next day with the excitement of the battle, and with the mud of the Brombeek still upon him, and with a plain straightforward story of how but two days previously—with zero at 5.30 A.M.—he had successfully led his Company and captured his objective. There was little, of course, said about himself; all his enthusiasm was for his two subalterns, Narcissus Macdonald

and Ian Erskine, who had both conducted themselves "superbly," and both of whom had been wounded in the attack. But his own reward came with the Military Cross, which he won on that occasion, and the recital of his conduct which gained him that award was as follows :—

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He led his Company with great skill under trying conditions in darkness, and it was entirely due to his untiring efforts that direction was maintained and the position captured and consolidated. His encouragement and example were beyond praise."

The reference to Langemarck in Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch suggests to me two other instances of that encouragement and example which so impressed Henry's men, and one of which at least took place about this time. They are set down as told us by his servant Macintosh.

#### PRIVATE MACINTOSH'S NARRATIVE.

(a)

"A typical incident of the Captain's care and thought of his men happened in front of Langemarck. The only marked road into the posts and pill-boxes (there were no proper trenches, as the ground was too water-logged) was along part of the railway line which led to Langemarck. The Germans seemingly knew that the railway line



was used at this point as a road to and from our front line. Every night after dark they kept a steady artillery fire back and forward along this point. The Company had a very rough journey going in, also a few casualties. The Captain remarked that he wished he knew of a safer road to take the Company out when we were relieved. Just as it was getting light on our last morning in the front line an Artillery officer and one of his men crawled into our post. They had come up on observation work. The Captain inquired what road they had come, and on being told that the Artillery men had come by a different route than our Company had come, the Captain wanted to know if it was a quieter and safer route than the one that was generally used. The Artillery officer explained that it was a much safer and shorter route, only there was no tape laid, and without a direction-tape it would be dangerous to take men out that route in the dark. The Captain then made a search in the two pill-boxes that formed our post, and managed to get one decent-sized ball of tape and a lot of smaller pieces. These were all joined together to make one long tape. About one o'clock in the day, when things were a bit quiet, the Captain and an Orderly crawled away from the post towards another pill-box about 300 yards away. Then they fixed one end of the tape in the ground, and commenced to lay out the new track. The enemy saw the Captain and the Orderly as they went over the crest of the little hill and fired a few shots at them, but they were soon out of sight. We used the new track going out that night, and found it a good mile shorter than the old track. The German shells were whining overhead on their way to burst on and around



the old track on the Langemarck railway. I may say the men were loud in their praise of the Captain, who certainly took a big risk in crawling away from the post in daylight."

(b)

"A few days after the British attack on Pilkem Ridge, Captain Dundas took a working party well up the hill to lay a wooden track to enable guns and ammunition to be brought up speedily. The party had not been long at work when they were observed by the enemy, who at once started heavy artillery fire on the party. The men scattered in all directions and took cover, but the Captain just kept walking up and down the strip of road as if nothing was happening. When the men saw the example that their Captain was showing them they very soon all returned and resumed work. Only one of the men was slightly injured, but I noticed a hole in the Captain's burberry which had been made with a piece of one of the shells. The Captain did not reprimand the men for leaving off their work. He only smiled when he saw them come back and resume their duties."

In less than a year from now the blow was to fall upon us which has crushed many a parent, but amid all the sorrow that has come to us nothing can ever deprive me of the memory of the exaltation of that hour of his return. I shall always see the little suite in Queen Anne's Mansions, where his mother, his sister Anne and I, were living: the presence of that radiant boy with his affectionate greeting in the broad Scotch

accent he delighted to assume ; his uniform still soiled with the mud of Flanders ; in his hand the old blackthorn stick—a mascot given him originally by his friend Miss Alice Neaves—which never left him from the moment he first went to France, and which—thanks to Macintosh—is with me now. And then there was that wonderful feeling which so many parents must have got to know, and to which many, alas ! pinned their faith, that he was—thank God !—safe from a fiery trial in which he had done himself (and us) honour, and that he was destined to come through the other dangers, and that all would be well. Truly a great feeling—while it lasted—which gave that time a very special value, and which made us better able than most to realise a few days later the tragedy of another war-picture. His friend Dudley Shortt,<sup>1</sup> who was at the time temporarily acting as Adjutant, was due to come on leave the following week, and it was arranged that he was to be one of a party with whom Henry was to dine one evening at the Carlton. Late that night I learnt from Henry that the party had not taken place, Dudley Shortt having been killed the day before he was to return, by a shell which burst close to Battalion Headquarters !

Henry's next period in France was short and severe, and may be summed up in the one word—"Cambrai." On getting back to his Battalion

<sup>1</sup> Son of the Right Honourable Edward Shortt, Home Secretary.

at the beginning of November the Guards were still in the region of Passchendael and the Houthoulst Forest, but they took no further active part in that somewhat ineffective assault, and were shortly on their way south to strengthen Byng's army for the projected attack on Cambrai. This may have been the result of preordained plans, or it may have arisen from the necessity to withdraw for service in Italy (consequential on the Caporetto disaster) other troops which had been destined for the purpose.

The march south imposed considerable strain on officers and men, and notwithstanding his recent leave Henry was beginning to show signs of physical weariness, though his spirits remained buoyant as ever.

"B.E.F., 18th November.

"Another long march—the longest yet, about eighteen miles. A lot of the troops very tired. But we are in good billets, both men and officers. I'm afraid that it's only for one night. It was a day on which everything ought to have gone wrong, as the billeting party only went forward this morning—but as a matter of fact everything was excellent. I'm just going to have an excellent dinner and then a long long sleep. Victor Mackenzie (second in command) is a charming man. Most marvellous of all, however, to-day we were having a halt when suddenly who should appear but Luss! All his old Company cheered, and I must say a great feeling of joy surged over me. He *is* a wonderful man. He's a man who can make

people do anything. I'd willingly charge into hell with that little figure in front of me.

"We did a more or less night march last night, starting at five—getting in here about nine. But, thank God! we came into a camp of huts—not those foul billets, which are always dirty, often inadequate, and widely scattered. I love just walking into a camp—so little trouble, and much more comfortable.

"I like the letters about the M.C., which you can put on letters if you like. Must rush off and inspect boots."

A week later they arrived at their destination to find no billets, but "just a field in which we lunched." The men, however, were shortly fixed up in dug-outs, and he himself and Pat Bradshaw disposed themselves in "a little drain under a road," which he pronounced comfortable. The Brigade were in a village just down the road. To him the great event on their arrival was his chance meeting with his friend Tom Hankey. "Wonderful reunion. He was waiting on the road for us to come through."

The events of the next few days have been constantly described—officially and unofficially—by people who took part in them, and critics have not been sparing in their comments upon some of the shortcomings of the Higher Command. In this light the letter that follows upon the operations at Cambrai is one which, so far as Henry's sentiments were concerned, might probably have been



written by any officer in the Guards Division. The invective, however, is Henry's own, and I do not feel at liberty to quote the language which he attributes to the Divisional Commander, and which—forcible as it was said to be—met with his high approval !

“B.E.F., 7th December.

“Back at last after the most hectic month I've spent in France. But, my hat ! the luck this Battalion has had. Barring 'C' Company, who got rather done in in the episode where poor little Arthur Kinnaird got killed. In the line twice, and a total casualty list of two killed and nine wounded to my Company. Laughable. The Division have been *absolutely superb*, and absolutely saved the situation—a thing that the papers of course hardly suggest at all. The 1st Guards Brigade at G——, the 3rd Guards Brigade at G——, and the 2nd—the poor beloved 2nd Brigade—massacred at F——. Situation thus—A, B, and C are three places held by the Boche. A and C are the dominating points—them taken, B falls automatically. What do our beauties on the —— Corps do ? A and C entirely *untaken*, they attack B with three Battalions. *Mon Dieu !* The Brigadier was perfectly superb, and General Feilding said over the telephone to the Chief Staff Officer of the Corps in question, ‘ . . . ! ’ Pretty good for the General.

“For those three Battalions *got* B, and held it with about 150 men per Battalion, and then had to come back because there was no one behind. But as X said, even if there had been supports they would only have gone into the melting-pot

too. Young Beaumont Nesbitt killed, and I'm afraid Jim Chitty—wounded and missing.

"We really are magnificent. The 2nd Battalion too have been very lucky—so the Regiment for once is all right. Our officers' casualties were: Arthur killed, Alan Burns, Scott, and Horton wounded. I wrote to you in the line four days ago—since when I have been so busy I haven't had a moment. We had great fun looting in G——, though, as the Brigadier said, it was rather melancholy looting, as it was all British stuff retaken from the Boche. The Boche has been behaving and fighting very well—not firing on the Red Cross; binding up our wounded, and other little amenities which one doesn't expect of him. But the general situation is grave. Russia—Kaput—and 100 Divisions, Boche and Austria to play with—and where are our Reserves! They *must* keep up the Guards Division, and yet the Irish Guards have got no one.

"How damnable this has been for you. How far, far worse the War is for you at home, and oh! my darlings, don't think I don't realise it. I have been remiss, but it's the result of extreme busyness, and one has been so hideously on the go all the time. Herewith programme of a typical few days:—

A Day. Move at 6 P.M., arrive in huts about 11 P.M.

B Day. Quiet day. ———

C Day. Move 7 P.M.

D Day. 3 A.M. Arrive huts.

E Day. Move 6 A.M. Arrive tents.

F Day. Move 6 A.M. Arrive in the open. No billets. Find shelter in the old Hindenburg Line.

- G Day. Move into the line at 7 P.M.  
 H Day. Line.  
 I Day. Line.  
 J Day. Come out at 6 P.M. Arrive in H line  
       about 11 P.M.  
 K Day. Move back to ruined village 12 noon,  
       ostensibly for four days, and then  
       right back.  
 L Day. The Battalion will move at once.  
       Move, 11 A.M., up the line—bivouac in  
       a wood for night.  
 M Day. 7 P.M. move into line.  
 N Day. }  
 O Day. } Line.  
 P Day. }  
 Q Day. Come out of line, 8 P.M., to bivouacs.  
 R Day. Leave bivouacs, 7 P.M.  
 S Day. Arrive tents, 1 A.M. (pitched that day).  
 T Day. Leave tents, 8 A.M.  
       9-12, wait at railhead.  
       Train 12 noon till 7, and here we are.  
       Not very bad.

“But here we are very comfortable. The men in nice dry huts ; we in a good house as a mess. ‘Sherlock’ and I sleep here—and life is very good. Brigade Headquarters just across the road. The wonderful ‘Boy’ went on leave yesterday. *What* a man ; and now lunch, and I shall be able to resume regular writing. It’s all over now, so—don’t worry. A thrilling railway journey yesterday through all the old Somme land. How interesting it was. I have such a strong reminiscent vein. If I had done ten years’ hard labour I should feel a sentimental glow on passing Dartmoor.”

"B.E.F., 10th December.

"We are now in quite a comfortable village about eight miles west of Arras, just off the main road to Doullens, where I think we shall be for some time. Wal. Grigg, late Brigade Major of this Brigade and now at G.H.Q., took me and Ralph into Arras in his car two days ago, and said that D. Haig was overcome with the wonder of the Guards Division. There is going to be a row about the Fontaine massacre, and I think some one may get sacked for it. Would to Heaven we could have Cavan back!

"Everything now depends upon the Americans and the usefulness or otherwise of their fighting troops, who will be the main source of reserve against the German Divisions from the Russian front. In fact they will form about the only reserve, as it doesn't look as if we'd get any more men, and the French certainly haven't."

Henry's next letter (on the 13th) was written from a Casualty Clearing Station, "whither the Medical Authorities have sent me, for they insist on a rest for my heart. So I shall probably be in England in a day or two. I'm glad I've managed to last through this last month or so—but I expect it is more sensible to take the thing in time. Otherwise, as the C.O. says truly, one might go up altogether."

Five days later he was writing from the Guards Club :—

"Everything has gone exactly as I planned. I had a Board to-day which gave me Home



Service. This means I get out of the hands of the Medical world and into those of the Regiment, who will give me leave till I'm fit (probably four or five weeks), then I go straight back to the 1st Battalion without any tedious interval at Wellington. The rest will be excellent, and I'm feeling better at the very thought of it.

"I've dined two nights running with Tim—and laughed so much as almost to burst. How we laughed last night. Tim and I a 'duo.' I'd to get off my chair and lie on the floor, I laughed so much. Old Tim is really wonderful. I'm going to try to get him up to Redhall for Hogmanay.

"I dine with Oliver to-night. He goes back to-morrow.

"I saw 'Boy' yesterday. He's too wonderful. What a man! If and when he gets a Division I swear I'll go on his Staff."

This arrangement was of course a glorious reprieve, both for us and for him, and in the circumstances nothing could have been better calculated—seeing that there was no organic trouble—to set him up in health in the shortest possible time.

In some other branch of the service it might have been his fate for a longer period to run the whole gamut of hospital, officers' convalescent home, and light duty at Regimental Headquarters, and one heard of course during the War countless complaints that these specifics were insisted on rather than the more obvious alternative of a restful life in a comfortable home and amid congenial surroundings.

The military answer of course was that congenial surroundings were not necessarily conducive to complete and speedy recovery, and it was to us a source of admiration, though at the same time of parental solicitude, to see in Henry's case how everything was made to yield to the prime necessity of his getting well again, so that at the earliest possible moment he might rejoin his Battalion in the field.

On his return home he lost no time in putting himself into the hands of Professor Gulland, C.M.G., who at first enjoined a quiet life and little exercise. During those weeks he would not touch a golf club, and abjured all night work and dancing. Later, when his heart seemed unduly torpid and a spell of violent exercise was recommended, he followed instructions to the letter, and the clean bill of health which came a few days afterwards was hailed by him with apparent acclamation, and preparations for departure immediately ensued. On 24th January he left us. He was a few days in London to report to his Board and get instructions at Regimental Headquarters, and of course he found time for one or more visits to Eton. His first letter to us was written on Sunday the 27th, on Eton Society paper—"This place is fascinating. Just living here is a joy in itself. Strolling about as one used to do. . . . Ah me !"

## CHAPTER VII.

JANUARY TO JULY 1918.

By the end of the month of January he was back in France, having had the good fortune to travel out with General Ponsonby, and he was at once immersed again in the spirit of the War, though, truth to tell, his life with the Battalion was not at that period as happy as it had been before and later again became. Primarily no doubt this was caused by the many changes in the personnel of the Battalion, and some disappointment also which he felt in regard to the matter of the adjutancy—due in a certain measure perhaps to his own want of diplomacy.

But he was too large-minded to trouble about anything overmuch, and the Divisional news which interested him principally at this time was the formation of the 4th Guards Brigade under Lord Ardee. The shortage of men was beginning to be seriously felt throughout the Army, and the authorities, following a system put into practice by the Germans some months before, were keeping

the Divisions nominally up to strength—though not increasing their numbers—by reducing Brigades from four Battalions to three. Thus each of the three Guards Brigades was reduced by a Battalion, and the three Battalions set free were formed into a 4th Guards Brigade, which later on fought most gallantly and suffered terribly. Captain Oliver Lyttelton was appointed Brigade Major, and Captain Eric Mackenzie Staff Captain, and they both wanted Henry to go as Staff learner—a suggestion which of course carried many attractions with it.

His twenty-first birthday took place on 5th February, and on the following day he described “a marvellous coming-of-age dinner on the night of the 4th. Just the old 2nd Brigade gang—Oliver, Eric, Damp, Wullie, and Ralph. We dined in a ‘roomy’ in a hotel. Oliver in amazing cue. It was worth while the headache of next day!”

The sector of the line between Fampoux and Arras now occupied by the Division was so quiet that he had it in his mind to write the ‘Chronicle’—with extracts from which this narrative begins, and was able to send us discursive letters such as those from which the following are extracts:—

*“12th February.*

“I watched the 4th Battalion Grenadiers marching out to-day—to come under Oliver and Eric. They were perfectly superb. The Irish Guards



followed them — headed by ‘Alex.,’ looking supreme. But as I looked at all the things that Eric (Greer) used to be so fond of—their drums and one or two things like that—I wept, quite properly. Poor Eric.

“Ralph and I had a long talk last night about all the people who had been killed. Truly 31st July was a grim day. Eric, John, Logie Leggatt were absolutely irreplaceable. One feels it all the more so with what is practically a new generation of officers who have never even heard of Eric and John. I must say I was always so proud of being a friend of Eric’s, for after all I knew him long before I got to the Brigade—when I was just an Ensign, and he was commanding a Battalion. What wonderful people they were: and now even Ian and Narcissus are gone.

“However, strangely enough, I feel in very strong cue—not so much rasping as ‘strong.’ Well, I must stop and do a little organisation. Do get better and let me know all about yourself.

“Dear Goo.<sup>1</sup> How is she? I thought of her to-day in a trench with a little steel helmet on. How delicious she would look!”

“B.E.F., 14th February 1918.

“I don’t think the German offensive will be anything to worry about. But I do admire the way they have played a winning game against those absurd Russians. Perhaps the collapse of verbose diplomacy unbacked by the slightest force will prove to Henderson & Co. the futility of their vapourings about Leagues of Nations and Peace and Socialism. But after all they haven’t learnt from the history of their own country

<sup>1</sup> His little sister Celia, aged five.

during the nineteenth century, so why should they learn now? The truth is, they don't believe anything they don't want to believe, and so they will go on in their senile, Homburg-hatted way to the end. Ye Gods! for one week of Prussian administration in this country. I wonder what would have happened to Litvinoff if he had gone to Germany. Pach!!

"I suppose you have heard the latest *embusqué* retreat, Versailles, where the Staff is rapidly assuming proportions which will make it necessary for the Government to take over the Ritz, the Meurice, the Castiglione, as well as the Palace they already occupy."

"15th February.

"A beautiful day to-day. A very close approach of a short period of emancipation from the joys of trench life. I met the Brigadier going round this morning. He complimented me on some work the chaps had done, and a great glow came over me. Now there's a man whom I hero-worship if you like. He is absolutely superb.

"There is another possibility on the tapis. The Brigade Trench Mortar Battery has fallen on evil days.

"'Boy' is determined to have the whole thing reorganised, and has announced his intention of taking some Company Commander to do the job. Now commanding the Trench Mortar Battery when it is the sort of ewe-lamb of 'Boy' might almost be worth doing—especially as I should try to pick my officers. But of course this is all entirely in the air."

Like most of the things about which he wrote to us as merely "on the tapis" or "in the air,"

this did not long remain so, and four days later we heard he had got the job, though the prospect did not hold out any allurements for him. For the next seven weeks indeed it was a case of kicking against the pricks, or rather of being torn by conflicting emotions, and what he hated most was being taken away again from his own Company.

"My Left Flank are in the line just beside me," he writes, "and I have to pass them moving about the trenches. It almost breaks my heart"; and again, "I think I shall be able to get back to the Battalion in about a month when I've reorganised this thing—at any rate I shall see the Brigadier and talk to that effect with him. One of the men wrote in a letter which I censored just before I left, 'The Captain is back, so everything is all right.' I nearly wept."

Another grievance was that his soldier servant Macintosh "has been foully reft from me to go and be a skilled workman in some Tank works. Of course I'm very glad for him, as he's married and need never have joined the Army at all—as he was working at Nobel's when the War broke out, and is a very highly-skilled man—but nevertheless it is a 'sair dunt.'"

What carried him through, however, was his anxiety to please the Brigadier. "I hope the man Brooke will come up the line this morning," he says. "I shall endeavour to convey an impression of resigned martyrdom which will touch

even his stony heart. But the bore of the situation is that he—the Brigadier—has put me into this to make a job of it, and if I come and shout to go back to my chaps he's bound to be rather sick. A knotty problem. How would you deal with it ? ”

He solved the problem himself by sticking to the work and grousing about it in his letters when the spirit moved him, though “as a matter of fact I am not so bored as my writing would imply. Just safety-valving.”

As O.C. Trench Mortar Battery, Henry once more became an inmate—for the time at least—of Brigade Headquarters.

*“2nd March.*

“I really believe the Brigadier has got me here in order to have a lively element in the mess, in which case G.S.O. III. may be looked forward to. ‘Boy’ is going to get Pringle and Hogge as his A.D.C.’s when he gets a Division. Rather a charming idea.”

*“10th March.*

“Nothing happens at all, and the date of the Boche offensive recedes with every succeeding day. The French, who are the accepted pundits on the subject, are full of dates—with little accuracy attached.

“If the Boche really means to attack he has had everything in his favour so far. On the front the betting is 100 to 3 against, though judging from the precautions taken it would appear to be even money.”



*"20th March.*

"We go to-night to the theatre to hear the Welsh Guards Band and see the Cinema. As perhaps I have observed before, the discrimination shown by Providence in the direction of the Boche shelling of this City is quite remarkable. The Cathedral, the Town Hall, and the Station are practically gutted. But the Theatre and the Baths—intact. Marvellous."

Before this letter reached us the newspapers had of course told the country of the rapid retreat of the 5th Army on the St Quentin front, and of the holding up of the German advance by Byng's Army in the neighbourhood of Arras. Henry and Ralph Gamble had again booked seats in the theatre for the night of the 21st, but when the performance should have taken place the audience were away on a very different errand. His letter of the following day merely reports the following—

"We are going to be rather busy, I think, as the Teuton seems to have begun his much-vaunted offensive—with exiguous results, I feel sure. However, I foresee a rather Cambrai-esque time for us."

*"23rd March 1918.*

"How delightful this is—sitting in a hammock-chair under a perfect Italian sky—feeling comfortably tired. We moved at 4.30 A.M., which is always rather exhausting, especially as I went on ahead 'à velocipède' to do the billeting—but all went well, and after rooting out some R.E.'s we now find ourselves in an extremely comfortable

place. For how long I can't say. Otto von Below seems to have scored on the first round, but I think the situation is now in hand. Of course it is really rather uncanny the way the weather favours the Boche. It is the general topic of interest, and is shaking the faith even of the Padres. It is really rather odd. Think of our pathetic offensives—drowned at birth like so many puppies by deluges of rain. Unser Gott! It has been absolutely perfect now—with the exception of two days since the beginning of the month.

"A great disaster—the Brigadier has had to go sick—gassed. He must have got a mouthful up in our last place, where it used to lie about for days. Anyway his voice went completely, and yesterday he got so bad that he had to go, though he said it would be only forty-eight hours—but I'm afraid it will be longer than that. Particularly unfortunate too at this juncture. The Brigade is being commanded temporarily by Follett, O.C. 2/C.G., who is the Senior Commanding Officer in the Division. I'm very anxious about Luss. His Division got pretty severely handled, and news of their formation is becoming rather hard to get. The 3rd Division put up a magnificent performance—the old tradition, of course."

"B.E.F.,

*26th-29th March 1918.*

"The great event of the day is the arrival of the newspapers, extracts of which are greeted with shouts of laughter and groans of derision from the assembled Company.

"We are frightfully comfortable here. Ralph and I are in one of those little houses which have been put up all over these villages for the returned civilians. Now, poor dears, they have all had to

'off' it again. How pathetic the whole thing is. I wish I knew what they have lost. Only by their casualty list can we judge how the account-book stands.

"I shall refrain from comment on the situation. Taisez-vous, &c. But if you would seek for the reason why we came back in a week a longer distance than we took in ten months—by us I mean the 5th Army, with whom the others have merely had to conform—read your Freytag Loringhoven on the British Army, and remember all our discussions on the futility of insufficient training.

"I think the situation will be retrieved by a blow between Noyon-La Fère—just look at that salient all along the Oise; but I'm afraid the French won't be too keen to use up all their reserves.

"We—the Division—have not been seriously attacked, though they have had one or two attempts which ended in complete failures. But the men are very tired since they've been on the go since the 21st, having only come out of the line on the 19th—after being in the line since 1st January—Pore Bloody Guards!

"Dear old 'Brandy' got killed to-day, and I made Victor ask for me back, but Gilly Follett wouldn't let me go till we get out, and the whole thing is got in hand once more.

"I've made the Trench Mortar Battery comfortable—if nothing else, and the job is now one that any subaltern could do, so the sooner I get back the better.

"Poor old Brand, he is the first of the Battalion to be killed. They have been, as usual, very lucky: Left Flank the best off of all, with only about eight casualties—including Somerville quite slight.



“Victor Mackenzie bids fair to become an ideal Commanding Officer, while Pip Warner, the new second-in-command, is full of ability. Everything looks promising for the 1st Battalion. I shall have ‘C’ Company, Luss’s old Company, and full of his traditions. All the three V.C.’s in the 1st Battalion have been got in that Company, and of course M’Aulay, V.C., D.C.M., is in it now.

“No doubt from St Quentin to Albert in about a week is extremely good going—particularly as it included the crossing of a large river. Yes, the Scottish troops have as usual done superbly, especially the 51st and 9th Divisions.”

As against Henry’s statement that the Division was not seriously attacked, ‘The Times’ correspondent, writing on 1st May, says as follows :—

“The Guards first came into the battle on 22nd March in the area of Henin-St Leger, whence they fell back in conformity with the general retirement, holding the enemy as they went from a line from Boisleux St Marc towards Moyenneville. Here was where our line came to a standstill, and on the 28th and 30th the Guards had to beat off very heavy attacks.” While Sir Philip Gibbs writes: “The recent history of the Guards begins with the battle of Arras on 28th March, when the 56th (London) Division and the 15th (Scottish), and the grand old 3rd Division made a wonderful stand against one of the biggest efforts of the enemy. On the 28th and 30th the Guards were heavily attacked, and beat off the enemy’s storm troops with exceeding great losses to them.”



"B.E.F., 10th April.

"Ivan went sick two days ago—with an abscess in his jaw. His wound isn't really fit yet, but of course he would come out.

"I am at the present moment commanding 'C' Company in the line. A very pleasant time we are having. I've spent most of the day enlarging these Company Headquarters, with the result that they are now palatial in the extreme. My subalterns are a very nice youth called Dent—nineteen, very keen, just the Ian Erskine type, and curiously enough a Wykehamist as well, and Maclay of Shipping Control fame, nice and very competent.<sup>1</sup> My Sergeant-Major *pro tem.* is M'Aulay, V.C., who told me this morning that having me in command of the Company was, according to the men, 'Just like Sir Iain back again.' I almost embraced him.

"The Major-General appeared this morning. I put in some useful work as the bright young Company officer. I return to the Trench Mortar at the end of this tour, but for a brief space only. Ivan having gone sick, I might get Left Flank again."

The German advance on Amiens was now being held up at Villers Bretonneux, and the principal danger was in the North, where the Channel Ports were seriously threatened by the capture of Kemmel Hill and attack on Hazebrouck. Writing on 18th April, Henry says:—

"We are all rather depressed just now, as the 4th Guards Brigade (Thirty—st Division) have

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Maclay was, unhappily, killed two days afterwards.

been badly cut up. All the Brigade Staff are all right, thank Heaven! also Alex. and Tim Nugent—barring whom I don't know any one in those three Battalions. The War has now simply resolved itself into a question of who are on one's flanks. With some people one might just as well wire oneself in all round."

There was probably no finer episode in the War, nor one fraught with more crucial consequences at a critical time, than this defensive action of the 4th Guards Brigade, who held on for the forty-eight hours necessary to allow the Australians to arrive outside the Forest of Nieppe on the Hazebrouck-Estaires road.

"B.E.F., 21st April.

"I am now back with Left Flank, at which I must say I am very glad. Macintosh is back with me in excellent form, and I have got the other man (Todhunter) a job with another officer.

"They have got a charming lot now in the Coldstream. When I dined there on Friday, Ralph and I sat at the top of a table seven deep each side in Etonians. We talked Eton shop the whole time. Wonderful.

"I have a delightful Company Headquarters, built into a bank chiefly with material looted from a derelict aerodrome just behind. I have got a bed and a charming stove and an arm-chair—nothing left out, and the line is very quiet. The time is now about 10 P.M., and rations have just arrived, carried up by the Company in support, as is the custom. With them is the mail, so I am waiting with interest.

"I am now extremely exalted, as 'Sherlock' (Holmes) has been made Captain, so now I have a Captain for my second-in-command. He shall certainly come into the line turn about with me.

"No news of the War yet. The loss of Kimmel is serious—thank goodness the French were responsible. The latter are still perfectly optimistic, so why should we be otherwise?

"The Official Account has just appeared of the fighting of the 4th Guards Brigade on April 13, 14, and 15. Absolutely epic. I wish it could be published abroad. But no. That would be unworthy of an Army all of whose Divisions are equally good!

"Blast the rain. I hear it pattering on the roof of my house. Fortunately I've managed to get some corrugated iron up to 'the chaps' in the posts, so they ought to be fairly dry.

"Fayolle seems to be the great French hero just now."

*"13th May.*

"A foul day, also no letter from you. I'm sitting in the mess playing the gramophone. Reel tunes, which are much appreciated by the French owners who live in the next room. A curious crew. Monsieur—about seventy—like a General leaning on a stick; Madame—about sixty—and very much alive; and the junior members of the household—two girls—aged about nineteen and seventeen; and a small boy, whose favourite recreation is swinging a cockroach affixed to a piece of string round his head. A playful youth. They are apparently all the children of a friend or relation who herself lives still nearer the line.

"A round of gaiety here. Three days I dined



at headquarters—moderately. The next day the Colonel dined with me—a wonderful meal. I felt like Oxford and Henry VII. You will remember the story.

“To-night Jeffery Holmesdale and Christopher Barclay from the Coldstream, and a youth, Edward Fitzgerald, a Grenadier, are dining. To-morrow I go up to relieve ‘Sherlock’ for a short spell. I hope the rain will stop by then. I dislike a wet war.

“I wrote to Bob<sup>1</sup> at Bushey. He ought to get on all right. Thank God I joined when I did. How simple it was then. Quite a good Captain, but a very moderate Cadet. I have come again into my old place of ‘Entertainer to those on High.’ I have but to say, ‘Pass the mustard,’ and they (—— & Co.) roar their ribs out. Quite pleasant. I’m having lunch with ‘Boy’—or rather Cuthbert Ellison—to-morrow on the way up. Wonderful man. Loads of love,

H.”

This visit to the line proved to be the last for some time. On 16th May he wrote descanting upon the peacefulness of his surroundings with a comment upon three Argylls, who at that moment were bathing on his left in a shell-hole entirely nude. Query: What will they do if the Boche suddenly attacks? He mentioned that he had with him in the line this time “Marsham Townshend, who has a son just gone to Eton. Charming. He calls me ‘Sir’!” And at the end of the

<sup>1</sup> His cousin, Bob Boothby. He received his Commission in the Scots Guards just before the Armistice.



letter there was a postscript, " 5.45 A.M. 17/5/18. I have been frightfully slightly hit—just a touch on the arm. Absolutely all right, but might get home for a month."

The episode itself was subsequently described in the Official 'Gazette' Notice, which recorded the winning of a Bar to his Military Cross as follows:—

"A strong patrol was sent out by night to endeavour to secure identifications. It was heavily fired at by a hostile post at close quarters, and only two men returned unwounded, the officer in command and two men being missing. The officer, with a non-commissioned officer and two men, went out to search for them, and in their turn were heavily shot at, the officer and N.C.O. being both wounded. Owing to the fire they had to withdraw, he, with the assistance of one man, carrying back the N.C.O. He then went round his posts and remained with his Company, though suffering from his wound, until ordered to the aid-post."

But a more intimate and graphic description of the incident was furnished to us by Macintosh, and is produced here as he wrote it for us. He selected it as one of two or three special instances illustrating the power that Henry had with his men, and the cause of their devotion to him.

#### PRIVATE MACINTOSH'S NARRATIVE.

"One night on the Boiry front the Company had a patrol out. Unfortunately the moon came

out very clear and our party was seen by the German sentries, who fired on the patrol. When the patrol got back to our lines it was found that the officer who was in charge of the party, also two men, were missing. The Captain at once took an orderly and went out into No Man's Land to see if he could find any of the missing men. But they were also observed by the Germans. The Captain was shot in the arm, and the orderly got a bullet clean through his shrapnel helmet, but was not hit himself. They managed to get back to our lines, and we got the Captain's wound bandaged up. It was bleeding very freely, and I wanted to take him down to the doctor at the aid-post right away, but he would not consent to go, as there was only one officer left. Although his wound was paining him a lot, he wrote out all his night reports, and it was not till after 'stand down' in the morning that he would consent to go and get his wound properly dressed. The doctor at once ordered the Captain to go farther back to the nearest dressing station. From there he was sent right down the line. An incident on the journey down to the Clearing Station will clearly show that even although the Captain was pretty well done up himself he could always remember others. I as his servant was allowed to go as far as the Clearing Station with him. It was a long journey—hospital to hospital, and always a wait till another car was got ready. At one of the relay dressing stations, when we came off the car, the Captain said to one of the doctors, 'Can you give my friend M'—some food, as he has not had anything to eat since last night?' I have often thought since that very few officers would have referred to their servant as their friend."

"No. 20 GENERAL HOSPITAL,  
18th May.

"The doctor says it will take about four or five weeks to get right—*i.e.*, fit to come back to the War. I'm afraid I feel rather a scrimshank getting hit just now when things are so uncertain, but it was in a good cause—looking for a chap who was missing.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately we didn't find him. But of course I'm awfully pleased for your sakes, you poor darlings. It means a good long spell of freedom from anxiety—and we shall have enormous fun. A comfortable hospital. The Head Sister in the Ward is Glaswegian, and wonderfully good, and there is a V.A.D. who is pure and richest Morningside. Hech ! ”

The two months which followed were a period of unalloyed happiness—only qualified by the thoughts of the future, and by his obvious determination to go back to France at the earliest opportunity. The wound itself was only a flesh one (having, alas ! as we must feel now, just missed the bone), but it was some weeks before it properly healed, and the loss of much blood at the time had palpably weakened him. His Company meantime remained in the charge of his friend, Captain R. E. Holmes, and it was intimated to him by his Colonel that it would be kept open for him. The news therefore which came to him one day towards the end of June, that Captain Holmes, while sitting on his (Henry's) own bed in Company

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Eric Coats, the officer in command of the patrol. His body was found when the Guards advanced in August.

Headquarters dug-out, had been killed by a shell explosion, not only saddened him greatly, but made him the more determined to get back to his men as soon as he could be passed fit by the doctors. This took place early in July—a quiet life at home having largely contributed to that end, and a week later he left his beloved Scotland for the last time.

Some days in London followed with his mother and his sister Anne,<sup>1</sup> during which time, as usual, the days were all too short for him to forgather with his friends. A day with him down at Eton (a visit which he repeated over and over again) on the occasion of the Eton and Harrow Match, and where with his friends Ivan Cobbold and Pat Bradshaw he did much recruiting for the Scots Guards—will stand out in our memory till the end of life.

I did not see him off on the 23rd, having had to return to Scotland the week before, but his mother was with him till he left. She had never failed him in these partings. On the previous evening she and he and his friend Lionel Neame (home wounded) went to the Gaiety. On the following morning he left Charing Cross, and his

<sup>1</sup> Anne, four years his junior, was at school during the whole of his foreign service, but his demand that she should be summoned to London or to Scotland for a part of all his leaves could not be gainsaid; and his arrival from or departure for France would often procure for her another day with him, of which a lunch at the Ritz and a *matinée* were generally outstanding features.



mother and his friend were with him. It so happened that his Colonel was returning from leave on the same day,—this no doubt secured Henry a seat in the Staff train, a fact which was always with him a subject of playful banter,—and the Regimental Pipers were in attendance to play the Colonel off. Other friends were going out at the same time, and his spirits were at their highest. There will never fade from his mother's mind the picture of him standing on the lower step of the Pullman—Sir Victor Mackenzie on the platform above—and with his whimsical loving smile slowly bringing his hand to the Guards' salute as the train moved away. And so her boy passed out of her sight.

## CHAPTER VIII.

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 1918.

THE Division was, when he rejoined his Battalion, in the same spot as when he left them—*i.e.*, the neighbourhood of Boiry, but the general advance of 8th August was not far distant, and of course must have been a subject of military discussion on the spot.

“B.E.F., 26th July.

“The whole Brigade is in the line, but apparently one does about one day in twelve in the front line, so it ought to be all right. At present I am with the details left out in a very pleasant camp. We, Dudley (Coats, the Adjutant), the Commanding Officer, and I go up this afternoon. Every one in very good form, and very glad to see me back. Mitchell’s handshake nearly broke my hand, such was its vigour.

“Every one seems to be very confident that the Germans are very low, and the line seems to be very quiet and comfortable.

“Michael (Tennant) and Bobby Abercromby are with me here, and Dalison comes up to relieve the latter in a few days.

"I went over to the Brigade last night to see them. The Brigadier in great form. I'm dining there to-night. Michael is going to be a great success. We discuss 'B' with animation. Tony Maynard has done well with Left Flank, but they are all pleased to see me back, I think. I must say I miss old 'Sherlock' horribly. Poor old Sherlock. What a loss he is.

"The weather still continues vile, though to-day it hasn't actually rained yet. But I prefer the sun for summer campaigning, though of course it makes it easier for Rupprecht to be offensive."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
31st July 1918.

"Your charming letters arrive, the best thing that each day has to bring. What fun we had—and I hope that total ruin is not the result. A wonderful day and an amazingly quiet line, in which we are engaged in the amusing, interesting, and rather arduous task of instructing Americans in the art of war. They are very apt, very keen, and very ignorant. I've got two officers up with me, Michael and Dalison who must be reminded very poignantly of Egypt by a day which is African in the splendour of its sun and sky. I think I told you he was an eminent Egyptologist, and is aged thirty-eight. The Brigadier came round this morning—in very good form. I feel a thrill of joy every time I get my 'Henry' from him—an honour bestowed on no one else in the Battalion—except, of course, dear Victor—who is more charming than ever. All the chaps are in roaring cue. Macintosh sits in the next room in the dug-out, and to hear him talking to the American Company Commander's servant is an education.

“Mitchell is enjoying life immensely—telling the Americans all about everything. Now I must stop and go and dine with the Yank Captain.”

This association with our American Allies was very interesting to Henry. A day or two later he refers to them as most amusing, and very bored with the trenches, and full of ardour to get over to the Germans and “do them in.” The line, however, he describes as absolutely quiet, “which makes a very good schoolroom.”

Another piece of news (welcome but unavailing) now came to the effect that his name had just (5th August) gone in for the Staff. “This doesn’t mean that I shall go for several months, but it just puts my name on to the waiting list. Of course leaving the Battalion is vile, but it is not a chance to be missed. Victor was delightful, and said I ought to go: if any one deserved it, I did,” &c.

But it was not to be. Previous experience led me to expect that once Henry had mentioned the matter it would within a very short time become a *fait accompli*, and from what we subsequently heard from Macintosh I fancy that this was in his own mind also. Whether, however, he for once misjudged his chances, or whether the impending advance determined the authorities to retain meantime a Company Commander who had shown his aptitude as a general utility man,



we shall never know. There was more desperate work awaiting him.

“14th-16th August.

“To-morrow Pip Warner, I, and other youths go into the line with an American Battalion. Pip at Battalion Headquarters, the others one each with a Company. Rather a bore, but it can't be helped. One will be so hideously uncomfortable, as the Americans know nothing about messing or food or comfort, which are the only things that matter in the line. I go in as a sort of consultant. I shall give excellent advice, but avoid exercise as much as possible. The hot weather makes one very lazy and disinclined for active participation in the War.”

Later—

“B.E.F.,  
16th August 1918.

“*Me voilà* in the line with our Allies—who are proving surprisingly competent, which is a blessing, as it leaves me with nothing to do—except sleep and make myself comfortable. The Company I'm with is in the support line—where I spent my last three days before going to the details, and as my Company comes up here again, I shall know the place fairly well by the time I've finished. There are four officers—the Company Commander, a charming-looking youth from Virginia; a pleasant youth from New York; a rather Jewish-looking little man from Detroit, I think; and the fourth, a Wild West gentleman, who looks exactly like a professional pugilist. The men are the most surprising mixture of nationalities. I've got Macintosh up here, also an orderly named X., an

amazingly brave little man from Broxburn, who insisted on coming up with me—rather touching, especially as I had had to reduce him to the ranks when he was a Corporal. He is much more comfortable as an orderly. There are five of us attached to the Battalion—Pip with Battalion Headquarters, and one each of the four corps—self, Scott, N. C. Tufnell (3/G.G.), and Rupert Fellowes an ex-Brakenbury scholar (1/C.G.) The time is 7.30. We are just going to dine—after which I shall go to bed and sleep all night. Rumour has it that we attacked again this morning in the south, to get the Germans out of the Noyon-Roye-Chaulnes Line. If we can do that he will have to go back to the Hindenburg Line again. Expert opinion thinks he will do that in any case. I got a long letter from Marjorie G. yesterday. The little New Yorker is very much in love with some heavenly Mame or Sadie whom he took to ‘Going Up’ (in New York) just before coming over here, so we sing the tunes all day. Well, must descend to the dug-out. I’ll continue after dinner. Dinner is not yet on the tapis, so I will finish. The American Commanding Officer is a man of enormous energy, and goes round the line incessantly. Four years hence? ‘Boy’ comes back on the 18th, I think. In the meanwhile Jack Brand is more than adequate.

“Our mail is coming up with the American transport, so I hope it gets here all right.”

*“20th August.*

“Ralph has come back from leave. Marvellous. He and I dined at the Corps Officers’ Club last night. Very pleasant, with a band playing ‘Pinafore.’”

“B.E.F.,  
21st August, 5.30 P.M.

“A frightfully hot day. Ye Gods, how hot! which the British and French signalised by doing an enormous attack, of which we formed the left. I am in with Battalion Headquarters.<sup>1</sup> Two Company Commanders go in, and of the other two not doing the attack one goes in with Battalion Headquarters—and the whole affair has so far been extraordinarily easy. The tanks who were assigned to us were not very helpful; however, the chaps did everything themselves, and the casualties are very light. Left Flank have only had one man slightly wounded. I had a most strenuous night last night taping out ‘the chaps’ assembly positions. Ralph was commanding the Left Front Company of the Coldstream, and is all right, thank Heaven! Our Battalion Headquarters are in what used to be my old Company Headquarters. Quite comfortable: Victor, Dudley, and myself. Pip has just appeared—from the details; he is left out—with news. Everything seems to have gone very well, and the French did a rawching show yesterday. The heat is a little trying, but Macintosh is getting the water situation in hand. I must shave, then I shall be more comfortable. The Colonel in excellent form; every one very pleased. The Brigadier has been up—in crashing cue, and pouring with perspiration. Michael<sup>2</sup> did most awfully well in the attack, and with a corporal and one orderly captured fifteen Boches. Mitchell also scored heavily, and did in eight Germans emerging from a dug-out. He described

<sup>1</sup> In point of fact, at the age of twenty-one he was acting as second in command of a Guards Battalion in battle that day.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Tennant, Henry's subaltern.

the same to me with gusto. Marsham Townshend took Left Flank in. The platoon sergeants too were splendid. Will write again to-morrow."

Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch of 13th September 1918 contains the following passage :—

"The Guards Division, which in March and April at Boyelles and Boiry Becquerelle maintained the northern pivot of our defences, on the 21st August attacked at Moyenneville, capturing that village and Hamelincourt. On the 24th August, St Leger was taken."

This, then, was the beginning of their share in the great advance which only stopped (untimely) at Maubeuge on Armistice Day. The crucial day was 27th September, upon which was made the successful attack on the Hindenburg Line, and on that day Henry's work finished. It was a different Henry from the one who left us just two months before, for he had meantime been given an insight into things of which before he had been barely conscious, and which are still hidden from the eyes of many of us. Had he been destined to survive another fifty years, the death of his friend Ralph Gamble, which occurred at this time, could not have failed to influence his life. His letters from now onwards evince a steadfast faith in the Hereafter which, however inherent it may be in most of us, seldom finds



such confident expression—at least at so early an age. None who knew Henry could suppose him to be capable of being simply carried away by the emotion of the moment. He would write nothing that he did not believe. These letters therefore shall stand, intimate though they are, because they show the true depth of character of which he has otherwise left no written expression. They are also a worthy tribute to a friend who was himself in all respects worthy, and to a friendship which, born indeed at Eton, was truly an outcome of the War, which drew real soldiers so close together.

“1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
22nd August 1918, 9.45 P.M.

“I can only write about myself to-night. Ralph was killed this evening, and nothing is the same. I loved Ralph more than any one in the world except you two. It was only this afternoon that I had lunch with him in his Company Headquarters, and now I shall never see him again—in this world. He was almost faultless—if any one can be that. Looks such as he had come from inside, and he was absolutely spotless through and through. He was marvellously brave—as brave as any one I have ever seen. But writing is no good. God, how I wish I could talk to you about him; but you will understand everything.

“John and Eric and ‘Sherlock’—I could remain the same because I had *him* to talk to: they were his friends as well as mine, and now he has gone and I can’t be quite the same.

"I think he was killed at once, so he didn't feel anything. But I can't write any more. I can't see the paper properly.

"My friendship with him was perfect—and life can't be quite the same, especially out here, where I'm alone. All love from

HENRY."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
24th August 1918.

"The Brigade is now out of the battle, having lost about 50 per cent of its effectives—but it is going on daily, and we shall probably move forward behind the advance. The 1st and 3rd Brigades have got to do their turn.

"They buried Ralph this afternoon. We came out of the line about 4 this morning, but I managed to get up to the Main Dressing Station, where I saw him—for the last time. He must have been killed instantaneously, thank God. Life without him will be almost unbearable. You can't realise what it is, and to what extent the War binds people together out here. And he and I used to do everything we could together. From the very first day when he arrived at the 1st Battalion Coldstream—on the day that we came out of the Somme—1st October 1916—seeing him and doing things with him have been the chief objects in my non-official life. I try to think that it's only seeing him off on a long journey at the end of which we shall meet again as we used to do—but it's terribly hard. I suppose, like John Dyer, he was too good for this filthy world. He was so marvellously brave and so wonderful with the men—because war and soldiering were no more his aim than they were mine.

I thought I'd forgotten how to cry. Now there are times when I just can't stop. The pipers come to-morrow, and I shall get my own three right away somewhere, and make them play 'The Flowers of the Forest.'

"God has taken him now, and I'm left with the memory of him in all the phases and chances of the last unforgettable two years. And so one must just go on, never doubting that the time will come when I shall see him again.

"I wish you'd known him better, but you will some day. Loads of love,

HENRY."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
25th August 1918.

"I went to see Ralph's servant to-day. The Coldstream are out next to us.

"What a meeting we should have had after the battle. He would have dined here and I should have lunched there, and this afternoon we should have gone over and had tea with the Brigade. But what's the use of saying all this? I've got his cap star, and Jeffery Holmesdale is going to get me one of his books. By the way, I've got one of them at Redhall. Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' in a reddish cover. I think in my room. Could you look it out for me and send it? The pipers played 'The Flowers of the Forest' to-day. It is a wonderful thing, and this evening my own people played it for me after dinner.

"If we don't move forward I shall go and see his grave to-morrow.

"Thank God I've got the Company. It helps to take my mind off. They were perfectly marvellous in these last shows. They captured Hamelin court single-handed. Fortunately few

casualties. Most of them slight gas. Michael did magnificently, and will probably get a D.S.O. How I wish I had taken them in. Delightful men : how marvellous they are.

"How charming the people in the 1st Battalion Coldstream are. Jack Brand is a wonderful man, their Colonel. He understands. So does 'Boy.' So does dear Victor.

"I've got 'the Goo' a steel helmet, and told the transport to send it off. I hope she gets it all right."

*"26th August 1918.*

"It's nice having Michael. There's just him and me in L.F. now. We had six officers wounded, two sick, so we're very short in the Battalion. I can talk to him so easily about Ralph. It does help me such a lot going over this last two years. How wonderful they've been. John and Eric and 'Sherlock' and old Logie Leggatt and he. I shall see them all some day. Till then—out here at least—Left Flank. I'm going to see the Brigadier and ask that should I ever go on the Staff I may always be with him. I couldn't bear any one who hadn't known Ralph. L.F. are marvellous.

"The battle goes well. These marvellous Canadians captured Monchy - le - Preux to - day. All the eagles are gathered together for the stroke which is to break the Hindenburg Line for ever. 52nd, 51st, they're all here. How he would have loved it. We would have discussed the whole thing and gone over all the old ground again—Ribecourt, Flesquières, Bourlon Wood.

"God bless you all—and him.—Yours,

HENRY.

"Poor Mrs Coats ; I wrote to her last night. We found Eric's body when we attacked."



"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
29th August 1918.

"Even looking at a map now is perfectly grim. Every place is so full of associations—especially all the places we are coming to now as we go forward—all the places we retreated through in March the 22nd, when he went up with the Coldstream to Henin, and I went up with the Battalion to Boiry Becquerelle—as liaison from the Brigade at Mercatel.

"Just a week to-day I was sitting with him in the sunken road the other side of Moyenneville, having lunch, and two hours afterwards he was killed. It's a funny thing. I wonder why a wooden cross and a little plot of earth should mean so much—when he is far away—and yet I don't suppose so very far.

"Can't you see the 51st Division once more going through the Chemical Works at Roeux—marvellously romantic! Old Scott has got the 'Mikado' out here. The gramophone is a great comfort. All the tunes he liked, and we used to play at Arras. I expect he can hear them now."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
4th September 1918.

"I'll make use of a pause in our pursuit of the retreating German to write. I'm at the moment just behind the old Hindenburg Line, looking once more at Bourslon Wood, more to the left than where we were in November. The Germans are retreating, and presumably to the Hindenburg Line, and we are just walking after them to see what happens.

"We had a proper attack on a place Lagnicourt yesterday morning—complete with barrage, &c.—and there was not a soul in the place.

"I got your latest letters written on the 29th—in the middle of the night in a small hole in the ground, where Michael and I were eating a good meal cooked by Macintosh.

"The sight of Bourlon Wood brings Ralph back so tremendously. All these places do. I got a letter last night from Osbert Peake—who was, I think, his greatest friend after me.

"The Coldstream are in reserve this time, and I should just be writing to him *viâ* the Brigade to tell him what was happening. Everything did centre round him. All that Cambrai-time—I always used to find the Brigade, or he would come along to the Battalion. Every day at Gouzeaucourt he and the Brigadier used to come up—and then when we came out of the line what meetings and arrangements; and most of the time I find myself thinking as if it was all unchanged—and then the truth comes back and hits one a great blow—just like telegraph poles beside the railway lines.

"A wonderful day to-day—how impossible this sort of thing would be in bad weather. We are just going to have lunch—so called. I'm not really very hungry, but I think Michael is rather. Gerald Drummond was killed yesterday. We are frightfully short of officers now, but personally I'd rather do things with one like Michael and the sergeants than a lot of people who only take up accommodation and do *nil*.

"I've made a lot of new corporals—all toppers. Still sitting here: just behind Mœuvres. I've got a letter from Tuppy Headlam, which I enclose. Just hits off the situation.

"The Brigadier more wonderful than ever. He is practically running the whole advance. What a man."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
9th September 1918.

"Just out of the line after a very strenuous and tiring week. In this part of the line the attack has come to a standstill for the moment—chiefly because of the Canal du Nord, which will have to be turned, probably from the south, where we are well across it. They are getting on wonderfully with the railways. The broad gauge is right up here now. The place we captured on the 4th and the Arras-Boilleux railway is nearly through. It's a tremendous thing getting the Boulogne-Paris direct route through—also Hazebrouck. It gives us so much better elbow-room for next year.

"Torquil Matheson has got the Division. He started the War as second in command of the 3rd Battalion Coldstream, and was the hero of Landrecies. He has since commanded the 4th Division very well too."

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
14th September 1918.

"Nothing of interest—except heat. We had a fine day to-day, and so trained religiously all the morning. The Brigadier, as usual, appeared and watched us. He always comes to see us—to tell the others how things should be done, I suppose!

"I've just read 'Eminent Victorians'—so good, I thought, and not at all what the criticism had led me to expect. I suppose to the old-fashioned attitude of canonising every remarkable person it would jar horribly, but personally I don't want to think of Florence Nightingale as a gentle saint

moving silently from bed to bed—which she wasn't.

"Gordon again. It doesn't make me think him any less great to know that on occasions he drank. Read that, and your reverence for Gladstone will be put to the test indeed. Arnold, I think, is probably the one which would outrage preconceived notions more than the others. But I know nothing about him, and so Strachey's picture of a perfect specimen of a prig leaves me unmoved, except by laughter. Manning I also know nothing about. I think he will interest you more than any. You must get it.

"The Battalion go up to-morrow. As I said, I don't go up, and L.F. are in reserve, so I shan't have any misgivings. Mitchell goes in, and Marsham Townshend commands the Company.

"The Americans have started, I see, and quite well too. The Germans must be feeling very queer, I should think.

"Victor is back with the details—about twenty miles away—I shall stay with the transport, and Pip is commanding the Battalion. How more than good he is.

"I've got a most charming collection of young corporals now: all quite young, rather wicked, and very keen. They're going to be thoroughly good.

"Last night we had a very good show. A bombing gentleman was caught by about ten searchlights and then held. Like a great silver moth he moved across the sky, moving every way to escape the light, but it was no good. They held him tight, and then suddenly one saw little points of fire darting out at him from something one couldn't see, but which we knew was a British aeroplane. Then suddenly roars of



applause from all the troops who had come out to watch this; one of the bullets must have got his petrol tank, for there was a sudden burst of flame—and the Boche falls slowly to the ground, a blazing mass. Superb, and of course that sort of thing at night is always much finer.

“Jack Brand has put Ralph in for something, and the Brigadier has made it a D.S.O.—a great thing. He, J. C. B., has given me a copy of the recommendation. It says as much as any words can say. But nothing can describe what he was—always.”

“1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
18th September 1918.

“We are frightfully short of officers now. I suppose the people at home will do something about the matter soon. We want about twelve junior officers at once, but I don’t suppose we shall get any, also very short of men. The Companies aren’t much above ninety rifles in the line. I have got the most intriguing armlets for my Company orderlies—red, like the ordinary ones they have—but with the S.G. crest in silver, and L.F. in blue—one letter on each side of the crest.

“Also this stamp, for all official correspondence. The money I should spend on smoking I spend on these things instead—so it is all square. Isn’t it nice? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He also had specially made in London a Company Headquarters flag and flags for each of his four platoons (Nos. 13, 14, 15, and 16). These he took out with him in July, and they were used whenever the Company was behind the line. Such things were in his opinion good for the *esprit de corps* of the Company, and no doubt he was right. The Headquarters flag now in our possession is reproduced on the outside cover of this book.

“I’ve just heard that Christopher Barclay was very badly wounded yesterday. Ralph’s Company Commander—also Horris Hill and Eton. One more. But gallant A. and intrepid B. are still with us!”

“1ST SCOTS GUARDS,  
19th September 1918.

“I’ve got some books out, which is a mercy, including ‘In Memoriam,’ which expresses my present state of mind more perfectly than anything else could. Four weeks ago to-day, and just about now, six o’clock in the evening. We have got no officers. However, I don’t mind very much. But it prevents one relieving ‘the boys,’ such as Michael & Co.”

“20th September.

“I went to see Ralph’s grave to-day. All the way round by Arras, where I went into the theatre. My God! how it takes one back going to a place like that. I went to our old Brigade Headquarters—the house is shut up, and has been badly knocked about. Then down that well-known Arras-Doullens road. It’s a wonderful thing that ‘In Memoriam.’ I just sat there and read it, with its almost uncanny power of being applied to one’s own particular case.

“I came back by the C.C.S., where Christopher Barclay is. He was as badly hit, so the Sister in charge of the ward informed me, as it is possible for any one to be, but they said he was doing as well as possible. Shot right through the stomach. They took the bullet out of his back. Poor Christopher. I haven’t been on the Arras-

Bapaume road since 22nd March, when I went up with the Battalion and Ralph went up with the Coldstream, to the Army Line just behind the Henin Ridge—and then back we both went to Mercatel.

“What a golden memory.”

“B.E.F.,

21st September 1918.

“We get our mention in ‘The Times’ of the 20th. The 1st Battalion Coldstream had the shoot at the Boche attack. We relieved them that night and came out to-night. L.F. have had at least fifteen casualties, mostly gas. Rather unlucky. Fortunately only one N.C.O.

“Our officer situation is becoming very serious—though, as I’ve said before, I am quite happy with Michael, Marsham Townshend, and my wonderful galaxy of N.C.O.’s.

“I enclose a photograph of ‘Mitch’ and ‘Fred,’ my Company Sergeant-Major on the right, and Company Quartermaster Sergeant. Take care of it. Mitchell is the most typical Guardsman; just look at the set of his cap. What a charming man he is. He is getting the D.C.M. for the 23rd, as is my Aberdonian, Nicol—you remember the man—he was a Corporal then—who sat outside my pill-box before the 9th of October. He’s a great favourite of the Brigadier’s. Younger, the Corporal I wrote to, is getting the D.C.M. He did frightfully well, and got wounded in the leg. Not a bad combination.

“The Battalion comes out to-night, so I’m just going off to see that everything is ready for them. I should think they’d be out for three or four days.

"1ST SCOTS GUARDS, B.E.F.,  
24th September 1918.

"As usual we, Left Flank, are much better off than any one in our mess, &c.—with our blue tablecloth, china, and things. I dined at Battalion Headquarters the night before last. Quite good dinner, but service (as they say in advertisements of hotels) very inferior. Tin plates and mugs. Horrors of every sort. Newspaper on the table instead of a tablecloth, &c. Very odd, because it's no trouble to have those things. It's simply because they have no real instinct for comfort. I had tea yesterday with the 7th H.L.I., who are next to us—in the Lowland Division. The people from Palestine. Very good, and more typically Scotch than anything you've ever seen. Little sturdy men with tammies and Harry Lauder faces. It did me good to see them. Most tremendously Hech! There was an excellent clergyman at tea, their Chaplain. A most gloriously Scotch man, and I should think damned good."<sup>1</sup>

"B.E.F.,  
26th September 1918.

"DARLING MUMMY AND DADDY,—An idle day as regards writing yesterday. No English mail again. However, there's no news, and therefore no material for epistolage. Weather good again, thank Heaven! We're really in very comfortable circumstances here. Two nights ago Hugh and a charming boy called Encombe in the 2nd Battalion dined. Quite pleasant. And last night Alec Robartes—as usual very amusing.

"Reggie Barker in this Company and Bobby

<sup>1</sup> See the Chaplain's letter, page 248.



Abercromby got fifteen partridges and a hare here yesterday with twenty bores. The place swarms with them. One of the sergeants in 'C' Company is, I think, the Duke of Westminster's head-keeper—so they arranged the most scientific drive with great success.

"The Germans get more and more depressed, and no wonder.

"My God! aren't these strikers incredible? The time has really come for the shooting of some of them—except that I'm sure they would if they were really a serious menace. I like Mr Gompers. How the Snowdenites loathe him. I hope the Nairn weather is less depressing.

"Matheson came round to see us to-day. An impressive man. Loads of love,

HENRY."

Early on the morning of the 27th September began the attack upon the Hindenburg Line, which proved to be the opening of the last and crowning phase of the War.

The sector covered by the Guards Division extended from the village of Demicourt northwards to the Bapaume-Cambrai road, to the west of and facing the Canal du Nord. The attack was opened by the 2nd Guards Brigade, with the 1st Scots Guards on the right, the 1st Coldstream in the centre, and the 3rd Grenadiers on the left. In the attack they had to cross the Canal, the bed of which was of course dry, and the first objective was about a mile beyond.

Before zero on that morning Henry had already

written a letter to a poor woman in Aberdeen, telling her of the death of her nephew and ward. "He was one of my best men, one whom I could ill afford to lose; and though for him everything is now well, the wrench and emptiness are terrible indeed for those at home."

Those were probably Henry's last written words, and undoubtedly they conveyed the expression of a faith and understanding which were really his.

The objective was duly reached, and he led his own Company with complete success through a trying barrage which caused considerable loss. What then happened has been narrated to me by one of his Company who was with him.<sup>1</sup> He climbed out of the trench to reconnoitre, there being a machine-gun post in the neighbourhood which was inflicting damage on other advancing troops. He was shot by a sniper (probably) when within a few yards of the trench, and four men who gallantly went out to try to bring him in were all killed or wounded. Then Paul and another man with great heroism went out—without their rifles. They were not fired at, and they carried Henry in. It is thought that carrying no rifles they were mistaken by the Germans for ambulance men. Henry was shot through the chest. He lived a very few minutes, and never spoke.

<sup>1</sup> James Paul, gamekeeper to Sir Archibald Edmonstone at Dunreath Castle, Stirlingshire.

His life was finished, but his memory will live in the hearts of many friends. Chapters of this book show how many he had in every class, of every age; and there may be some of a wider circle who will read these pages not without interest, recording as they do the life of a boy who died indeed when he was twenty-one, but who had within him (besides the many graces which sweeten life) just those qualities which our country now most requires in her sons—Faith, Courage, Vision, Character.

Hundreds of letters brought us grateful testimony of the admiration he had earned, the love in which he was held by his friends, and the influence which he had on the lives of many of his companions. Only five or six are printed here, and at the end I am setting forth some lines which came to us anonymously, and of which we have never learnt the authorship. In so doing I take the opportunity of thanking our unknown friend for the comfort he sent us in a time of trouble.

“HEADQUARTERS, SCOTS GUARDS,  
BUCKINGHAM GATE, S.W.,  
1st October 1918.

“DEAR MR DUNDAS,—I can’t tell you how very distressed I am to hear to-day the sad news that your son Henry was killed in action on 27th September with our 1st Battalion. I regret

to say I have no details to give you, but I hasten to send these few lines to express on behalf of the whole Regiment our most sincere regrets and heartfelt sympathy with you and yours in your severe loss and great sorrow.

“Henry was one of our most promising officers, and had gained a splendid reputation as a Company Commander—he was in fact the best Commander serving with the 1st Battalion, and was destined to make a great name as a soldier and Scots Guardsman. He was beloved by the men under him, and popular with all his brother officers. His loss to us is indeed a very severe one, and at the present juncture most terribly felt. I have had nothing but the most excellent reports of his gallantry and splendid work during the whole of his service, and his place will be very hard to fill. I know that his Company had a very trying and difficult task during the fight, and that they suffered very considerably in spite of the grand manner in which Henry led them.

“I can only again assure you that we all mourn the loss of a splendid Scots Guardsman and a most charming brother officer, and can assure you that his memory will always be held in loving regard and esteem by the whole Regiment.  
—Yours very sincerely,

J. W. SMITH-NEILL.”

“28th September 1918.

“DEAR MR DUNDAS,—It is very hard to have to write and tell you that your splendid son Henry was killed yesterday. Death was practically instantaneous, and he could have suffered no pain. He was shot by a sniper, the bullet going through his heart. He was buried to-day in a



small British Cemetery at Boursies. All officers of the Battalion, the whole of his Company, and many other men were at the funeral. The Pipers played 'The Flowers of the Forest'—a lament which he loved—at the end of the service. All will be done to make his grave as nice as possible, and a cross is being made.

"Henry was the life and soul of the Battalion, and was loved by us all. As a soldier he was magnificent, so wonderfully capable, gallant, and cheerful. He was adored by his Company, who would have followed him anywhere. I know that it is the death he would have chosen. He was commanding his Company, of which he was so proud and fond, in an entirely successful attack at the time.

"I cannot tell you how deeply we all sympathise with you and Mrs Dundas, and if any one in this Battalion can do anything to help you at any time, I hope you will let us know.

"I was personally very fond of him, and shall miss him more than I can say, both as a soldier and as a most delightful and charming friend.

"Please accept my very deepest sympathy in the loss of your wonderful, brave boy.—Yours sincerely,

VICTOR MACKENZIE,

(Lieut.-Col. Commanding 1st Bn. Scots Guards)."

*"28th September 1918.*

"DEAR MRS DUNDAS,—I write to offer my sympathy for the sad loss you have received. I can hardly realise yet that he is gone from amongst us and that we shall never hear his cheery voice again. The Captain died a true soldier's death, leading his men into action. They

had reached their objective when a machine-gun bullet laid the Captain low. I am glad to say he suffered no pain, as he was unconscious, and he only lived a few minutes after being hit. We brought him back with us that night a long distance from the firing line, and we buried him this afternoon on the outside slope of a ruined village. He sleeps in the centre of a little green square of grass, and on ground that he helped to recover during our second last attack. He was liked by every one as a thorough sportsman, and as a leader of men he was hard to beat. His kit will be sent home in due course, but I am going to send you a few small articles by post which I know he valued. The little book of poems has been his constant companion since it arrived a few weeks ago. You must excuse me if my letter seems crude, but it is hard for me to express what I feel for the loss of my Captain. I have been his servant for over a year, and I never had a wrong word from him during that period. The bagpipes, which he loved so well, played the 'Land o' the Leal' when he was laid to rest. I beg leave to express my heartfelt sympathy for the loss you have sustained, but you have the consolation of knowing he was a true British gentleman and an extremely brave man, who gave his life for his country and died with a smile on his face. Again offering my deepest sympathy and condolences. —I am, the late Captain's servant,

J. M'INTOSH."

"1st November 1918.

"DEAR MADAM,—Just a few lines on behalf of the Company to tell you how sorry we were to lose your son, our Captain; and I cannot tell you how

much he is missed by us all, as we had been in many tight corners together, and we always knew when we had your son leading us we would get through if there was a way through at all, and I am sure we shall never get another like him, as he was so good both in the field and when we were out—only he was too brave, and on the 27th he was an example to all, and it was nothing but his disregard for danger and his courage and skill under a terrible fire that pulled us through, but I am sorry to say that we lost a lot of our Company that day; but Captain Dundas led his men to the very last, and was the same as he always was—a hero. I cannot put into words how sorry we all are to be without him, and the whole of the Company send their deepest sympathies. I would have written before, but we have been very busy in the line, so I hope you won't think this out of place at this time. We are still getting on very well, but we have a lot to do yet; but everything is looking much better. Hoping you are in the very best of health.—I remain, yours truly,

(Sgd.) A. MITCHELL, C.S.M.,  
L.F. Coy."

"15TH BN. HIGHLAND LIGHT INFANTRY,  
12th April 1919.

"DEAR MRS DUNDAS,—You will forgive me writing, I am sure; but after many days I got your address and a living touch with your home. I joined this Battalion a fortnight ago, having served formerly with the 1/5th and 1/7th H.L.I. of 52nd Division in Palestine and France, and also in other Units. Talking over experiences at dinner last night young Younger and I happened to

mention the Scots Guards. I asked him if by any chance he had known a brilliant lad by the name of Dundas, and it transpired that they had been at school together and had been friends. I met your very gallant son between Noreuil and Quéant about the 23rd September last year. His Battalion and ours were in reserve, about a mile apart. Our pipe-band was playing in the afternoon, and I saw your lad wandering through our lines and then sitting down to listen to the music. He told me that he was very fond of pipe music, and that he had just come across to hear our band. We had tea in our little mess, and a long chat, and he returned two days afterwards. Then our Corps moved towards the Canal du Nord. The Guards were on the right of our Division. Some days later I was burying men at Graincourt and a doctor came along. He told me that he was with the Scots Guards. I asked at once for Dundas, and he told me, to my great sorrow, that he was killed in action a day or two before. We only met twice, and spent in all about two hours together; but I must say that amongst the many officers I have met in various Units I met none like your son. I cannot just say what quality in the lad captivated me. He was to me a Bayard, without fear and without reproach: the efflorescence of magnificent young manhood. He was a brave soldier, admired and loved by his men, for with all his splendid intellectual qualities he possessed a so rare loveliness and the secret of making friends.

“It was no surprise to me to learn later that he was a brilliant scholar of Eton and Oxford. Not that he paraded his learning: the very reverse. He was most unassuming; but one could not mistake the quality of the lad. Such



men cannot die. They are for ever in the keeping of our God, Who wastes nothing.

"May God comfort you in your peculiarly sad loss; and may the gracious memory of your beloved and winsome lad grow dearer year by year, until you meet.

"With regards and sympathy.—Yours sincerely,  
ALEX. MACINNES, C.F.,  
15th H.L.I."

"ADELPHI TERRACE HOUSE,  
STRAND, W.C.,  
29th October.

"DEAR MRS DUNDAS,—I thought so much of your boy that though you don't know me you will perhaps allow me to say how deeply I sympathise with you. He was a great friend at Eton of my boy, Peter L. Davies, and sometimes came here. The last time I saw him was at Eton in July, and I assure you that I thought him a brave sight. There was an air of the gallant knight about him always that drew one to him, it so well became him. He seemed to me, knowing some little of what lay beneath that, to be marked out for notable things. We must accept that the best of all is to stand the test of manhood.—Yours sincerely,

J. M. BARRIE."

## A TRIBUTE TO HENRY DUNDAS,

FROM ONE OF HIS BEST ETON FRIENDS.

“ I loved Henry—and Henry, I know, returned my devotion. If our tastes were not all mutual, and if our interests were not all the same, these very differences only tended to cement our affection, and increase our mutual respect.

“ Henry’s extraordinary power of concentration, his varied interests, and above all his intense enthusiasm, made his personality unique, and his every doing of interest. Nothing he ever did lacked character. That was the secret of his early life. That is what made him what he was, and that is what gives his memory a peculiar and a particular freshness.

“ In the broadest and best sense of the word, he was an artist at whatever his hand found to do. The affair of the moment was the one and only thing that mattered—on it he concentrated all his genius, and on it he lavished all his buoyant enthusiasm.

“ But far above all else was his great and generous love for those people and things he held most dear. In this he showed a depth of feeling—an honest frank confession of sentiment—which it is rare to meet.

“ Such a combination of capacity for taking in, and of generosity for giving out, would surely

have been equipment for any future. Henry was not only worthy of these great gifts, but he made the most of them. Blessed by nature with great qualities, he gave freely of them all until he demonstrated 'the greatest love of all.'

"It is with gratitude for what he did with his life, no less than for what he gave during his life, that I offer this small tribute.

"It was always more than a pleasure to be with Henry; it is an honour and a privilege to remember him.

V. A. C."

HENRY DUNDAS,

27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918.

Young Lion-heart is gone,

Who to the end ne'er strove but to attain ;  
Through death to deathless life he has passed on,  
Nor made the crowning sacrifice in vain.

The peace he died to win

Was dawning on those tragic fields he trod,  
When through the dawn his gallant soul went in  
To the full glory of the Peace of God.

Brilliant distinguished boy !

A boy in years, a proven strong-souled man  
In high achievement ; his the enthralling joy  
Of filling to the brim his life's brief span.

For Love's sake let your courage match his own ;

Make no vain lamentation o'er his grave :  
Life more than even he has ever known  
Thrills through him now : Mourn bravely for  
the Brave.



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